



PLAYSTATION 3

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Issue 032 June 2009 £5.99
officialplaystationmagazine.com

inFamous

Be the villain, destroy the city

18

ASSASSIN'S CREED II

Amazing
sequel
revealed



Uncharted 2 online
mode revealed
Massive Red Dead
Redemption feature
Modern Warfare 2
trailer secrets
How to make the
big games better...

Official Magazine - UK

0 61
9 771752 210016
ISSUE 032 JUNE 2009 £5.99



Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

SUPERPOWERS RIP-OFF DLC PES 2010 ROGUE WARRIOR



**THEY'RE THE GODS OF METAL,
AND YOU'RE JUST A MERE MORTAL.
GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.**

Metallica and 21 other guest acts are coming to Guitar Hero.
Metallica.guitarhero.com

GUITAR HERO® METALLICA

BRACE YOURSELF.®

“BREATHTAKING RIFFS... AN INCREDIBLE
EXPERIENCE... THE BEST VERSION OF
GUITAR HERO YET”

XBOX 360



PlayStation®2

PLAYSTATION®3



XBOX
LIVE

Wii

NEVERSET



redoctane

ACTIVISION®

Guitar Hero Metallica © 2009 Activision Publishing, Inc. Guitar Hero, Activision and RedOctane are registered trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. Metallica is a registered trademark of Metallica. “B,” “PlayStation” and “PLAYSTATION” are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. WII AND THE WII LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

activision.com

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Welcome



I'm sort of furious

I took it home just
before deadline,

excited by our review and
wanting to play through it at a
leisurely pace. Instead, I ended
up on it until the small hours of
the morning for three nights in a
row, unable to focus on anything
but hoovering up XP to upgrade
my magical hands of electrical
justice. And now I'm here, head
fried, trying to write this.

I fully expected to be a
vengeful, Old Testament kind of
god, but it says something about
how beautifully realised the
game's world is that you want
to save it, to be the hero that the
city needs. I think the reason it
feels so moreish is because it's
so streamlined. Anything that
isn't fun has been jettisoned,
leaving only slick, thoroughbred
gameplay behind. We like it a lot.

Elsewhere this issue you'll
find the usual raft of exclusives
– like our UFC review and Red
Dead Redemption blowout –
alongside the first look at
Assassin's Creed II, news on
Uncharted 2's multiplayer mode
and a hands-on with MAG,
Sony's ridiculously ambitious
shooter. The only downer is it
turns out the tingling in my
hands is just RSI.

Tim Clark
Editor-in-chief
tim.clark@futurenet.com

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

82

INFAMOUS

Sony's superhero game is shockingly good

Save 15%
Off every issue
See page 38

FEATURES



72 WE CAN REBUILD THEM

Our experts take a scalpel to games in need
of a bold new look. More botox, Mr Snake?



70 IN THE MOOD FOR... SUPERPOWERS

From super-strength to tentacles of death, we
give you the coolest powers on PlayStation.



62 RED DEAD REDEMPTION

Rockstar's sandbox gunslinger might just be big enough for the both of us.



88 UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED

Mixed martial arts comes to PS3, and it's as brilliant as it is brutal.



40 MAG

One battleground. 256 players. Massive Action Game? You're not kidding.



92 FUEL

Codemasters' ace new racer takes cataclysmic global warming in its stride.

THE BIG 10 STORIES

| | |
|---|----|
| Assassin's Creed II Tools | |
| Up For An Italian Job | 10 |
| Who Will You Play As In AVP? | 12 |
| Is It Too Soon For Konami's Fallujah Shooter? | 14 |
| The Weird World Of Noby | |
| Noby Boy's Keita Takahashi | 16 |
| Uncharted 2 Gets Multiplayer | 18 |
| PES Upping Its Game | 19 |
| PlayStation Periodic Table | 20 |
| Modern Warfare 2 | |
| Secrets Revealed | 22 |
| Fat Princess Beta Binge | 24 |
| Is Resi 5's Vs DLC A Rip-off? | 25 |

AGENDA

| | |
|--|----|
| Informer | 26 |
| Is OnLive really the future of gaming? | |
| Culture | 28 |
| Cosplay chameleon comes over all Frosty. | |
| Personal | 30 |
| Unravelling Home's alternate reality game. | |
| Tech | 31 |
| The shiny things we wish we could afford. | |
| Sony | 32 |
| Get your fingers on the X-Series Walkman. | |
| Events | 34 |
| Win X-Men on PS3 and a 37-inch HDTV. | |

PREVIEWS

| | |
|----------------|----|
| MAG | 40 |
| Borderlands | 44 |
| Dead Rising 2 | 46 |
| Mafia II | 48 |
| Call Of Juarez | 52 |

FEATURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Once Upon A Time | |
| On PlayStation | 62 |
| Rockstar's Red Dead Redemption rides west. | |
| In The Mood For... | |
| Superpowers | 70 |
| Our heroes show us what they're made of. | |
| We Can Rebuild Them | 72 |
| Perfecting great games, OPM-style. | |

REVIEWS

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Infamous | 82 |
| UFC 2009: Undisputed | 88 |
| Fuel | 92 |
| Guitar Hero Metallica | 94 |
| Phantasy Star Portable | 95 |
| Major League Baseball 2K9 | 96 |
| Pro Baseball Spirits 5 | 96 |
| Worms | 97 |
| X-Men Origins: Wolverine | 98 |
| Flock | 99 |
| Bionic Commando | 100 |
| Buzz! Brain Of The UK | 102 |

| | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Powerup Forever | 102 |  |
| Tenchi Shadow Assassins | 103 | |
| Silent Hill | 103 | |
| Trivial Pursuit | 103 | |
| Online: Killzone 2 | 104 | |
| Online: FIFA 09 Ultimate Team Mode | 106 | |
| Online: Unreal Tournament III Titan Pack | 107 | |
| Online: Prince Of Persia Epilogue | 107 | |

DIRECTORY

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| PS3 Directory | 108 |
|---------------|-----|

Every month only in

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Expert opinion on every PS3, PSP + PS2 game. The latest PlayStation news direct from Sony. Unrivalled behind-the-scenes access. In-depth coverage of the games you want to play. Features you won't find anywhere else. More pages, more games, more PlayStation than any other magazine.

Next issue on sale
9 June



PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Who we are...

Tim Clark Editor-in-chief

Took a day off to cook the 'curry of justice'. Justice was revisited an hour later as he played six-a-side.

Game of the month

Worms

Favourite supervillain

Mekon



Ben Wilson Deputy editor

Volunteered to keep nets for our six-a-side team. Conceded five. Never playing in nets again.

Game of the month

FIFA 09 Ultimate Team

Favourite supervillain

Mumm-Ra



Leon Hurley Commissioning editor

Had melt down at having to take three planes in one day. With propellers!

Game of the month

Resident Evil 5

Favourite supervillain

Khan



Nathan Ditum Reviews editor

Went on holiday to Sheffield after insisting all his work was definitely, absolutely, positively finished. It wasn't.

Game of the month

inFamous

Favourite supervillain

Rachel Penny



Helen Woodey Operations editor

Missed Metallica gig. Inwardly heartbroken, outwardly ice-cool and super-efficient as ever.

Game of the month

Guitar Hero Metallica

Favourite supervillain

Dick Dastardly



Follow the mag at twitter.com/OPM_UK

Subscribe to OPM now



1 ONLINE
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/POM/P032

2 TELEPHONE
0844 848 2852 quoting reference P032



To order an issue of any Official PlayStation magazine, just call **0844 848 2852** or visit myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0) 1225 732275
Email opm@futurenet.com Web futurenet.com

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief Tim Clark tim.clark@futurenet.com
Deputy editor Ben Wilson ben.wilson@futurenet.com
Art editor Mark Wynne mark.wynne@futurenet.com
Deputy art editor Steve Gallagher steve.gallagher@futurenet.com
Operations editor Helen Woodey helen.woodey@futurenet.com
Commissioning editor Leon Hurley leon.hurley@futurenet.com
Reviews editor Nathan Ditum nathan.ditum@futurenet.com
News editor Rachel Penny rachel.penny@futurenet.com
Content producer David Boddington david.boddington@futurenet.com
Assistant producer James Jarvis james.jarvis@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Writers Jon Blyth, Sarah Ditum, Paul Fitzpatrick, David Houghton, Richard Leadbetter, David McCarthy, David Meikleham, Louis Pattison, Mike Sterry, Keith Stuart, Steve Williams
Designers Phil Haycraft, Damian McGee
Photography Rob Scott
Illustrators Orin Shepherd, Paul Tysalt

Creative director

Robin Abbott
Design director Matthew Williams
Editorial director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING

Sales director Malcolm Stoddley malcolm.stoddley@futurenet.com
Advertising director Mark Hanrahan mark.hanrahan@futurenet.com
Ad manager (print) Jas Rai jas.rai@futurenet.com
Ad manager (online) Andrew Church andrew.church@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Dan Lessons dan.lessons@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Oliver Chislett oliver.chislett@futurenet.com
Sales executive Alistair Williams alistair.williams@futurenet.com
Sales executive Mark Wooldridge mark.wooldridge@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Trade marketing manager Stuart Agnew stuart.agnew@futurenet.com
Trade marketing executive Matt Cooper matt.cooper@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION

International Account Manager John Lawton john.lawton@futurenet.com
Trade marketing director Rachael Cock rachael.rock@futurenet.com

PRINT & PRODUCTION

Head of production Richard Mason richard.mason@futurenet.com
Production manager Rose Griffiths rose.griffiths@futurenet.com
Production co-ordinator Vivienne Turner vivienne.turner@futurenet.com
Buyer Colin Polis colin.polis@futurenet.com

LICENSING

International licensing director Tim Hudson tim.hudson@futurenet.com
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0)1225 732275

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED

Publisher Richard Keith richard.keit@futurenet.com
Publishing director James Binns james.binns@futurenet.com
Chief operating officer Simon Wear
UK Chief executive Robert Price

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone our UK hotline on 0844 848 1602
Subscribe online at myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 9 June 2009

Printed in the UK by William Gibbons on behalf of Future.

Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,

2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. Tel: 0207 429 4000

Want to work for Future?
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs

A member of the Audit
Bureau of Circulations
33,44
1 Jul - 31 Dec 2008



Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines, websites and events for people who share a passion. We publish more than 170 magazines and websites and 100 international editions of our titles are published across the world.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive: Stevie Spring
Non-executive Chairman: Roger Parry
Group Finance Director: John Bowman

Tel +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244 (Bath)

© Future Publishing Limited 2009. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Limited is at Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



The text paper in this magazine is totally chlorine free. The paper manufacturer and Future Publishing have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

RED FACTION® GUERRILLA™



PRE-ORDER
TODAY AT **GAME**
The next level

GAME
Exclusive

TO RECEIVE A FREE REPLICA
HEAVY WALKER FIGURINE



ON SALE 5TH JUNE



XBOX 360.
XBOX
LIVE.
GEO-MOD 2.0

PLAYSTATION 3
volition V inc.
THQ

© 2009 THQ Inc. Developed by Volition, Inc. THQ, Volition, Inc., Red Faction: Guerrilla, Geo-Mod and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.

*Terms & Conditions
Available when you pre-order and purchase Red Faction Guerrilla. Available while stocks last, offer can be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Online offers may vary.

SMASH AUTHORITY.COM

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

On your disc



Old McRatchet had a farm, ee-i-ee-i-oh, and on that farm she had three freshly grown demos for you to sample. That's right, down among the rebel turnips I found Red Faction: Guerrilla, a game that's all about making stuff explode...

On Mars! Out in the petrol fields there was a tasty Wheelman demo ready for harvesting, and in the movie magic orchard Wanted: Weapons Of Fate was ripe for the picking.

Add to that the 11 other demos picked from our fertile archives and it's a bumper crop for the OPM farm this month. If these beauties don't win best in show at the county fair, I'll eat my flat cap.

Rachel Penny Agenda editor



This month's exclusive highlights...



Red Faction: Guerrilla

It's open world mayhem on Mars. You are sledgehammer-wielding Alex Mason, a rebel miner with a cause.



Wanted: Weapons Of Fate

Learn the delicate art of bullet curving, fighting at 30,000 feet and laugh out loud at the idea of a magic loom of fate.



Killzone 2

It's shooter eye candy with a deliciously gritty sci-fi flavour. Butch up and take on the Helghast at the Corinth river. [They'll be the ones with the red eyes.]



FEAR 2: Project Origin

Hell hath no fury like a little girl scorned, and Alma is back to add the scares to this run-and-gun freak show.



Wheelman

A driving holiday with a difference. Visit Barcelona, hang out with Vin Diesel, and master the subtle nuances of hijacking cars at high speed. Complete the main objective and the two side missions and you're free to roam the road at your leisure.

What if my disc doesn't work?
If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we'll replace it. You can also email questions to opm@futurenet.com.

Also on the disc this month **Playable** Tom Clancy's HAWX, Dead Space, Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway, Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots, BioShock, The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest, Sonic Unleashed, Skate 2, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift **Video** Astro Tripper, Metal Gear Solid Online

Unlimited flirting.

Unlimited texts and web access when you top up £20 a month,
only on the Addict Pay As You Go tariff.



0800 052 0546
virginmobile.co.uk/addict
visit Virgin Media stores,
Phones 4u and The
Carphone Warehouse.



Legal Stuff: Free texts and web access will be added on the first day of the month following the top-up and are valid for one month or until used. UK use only. Excludes premium rate services. Unlimited texts subject to fair use policy of 3,000 texts per month. Unlimited web access subject to fair use policy of 1GB per month. Does not include use for file sharing, making internet phone or video calls, roaming, or certain other uses. Excessive use will be charged. Monthly top-up of £20 required to get free texts and web access. Other restrictions apply. See www.virginmobile.co.uk or call Virgin Mobile for full details.

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

AVP on PS3

We hug the face of Aliens vs Predator.

► **Page 12**



Shooter controversy

Konami's Iraq-based game triggers row.

► **Page 14**

Boy talk

Enter the wild world of Keita Takahashi.

► **Page 16**



Sony science

Check out our PlayStation periodic table.

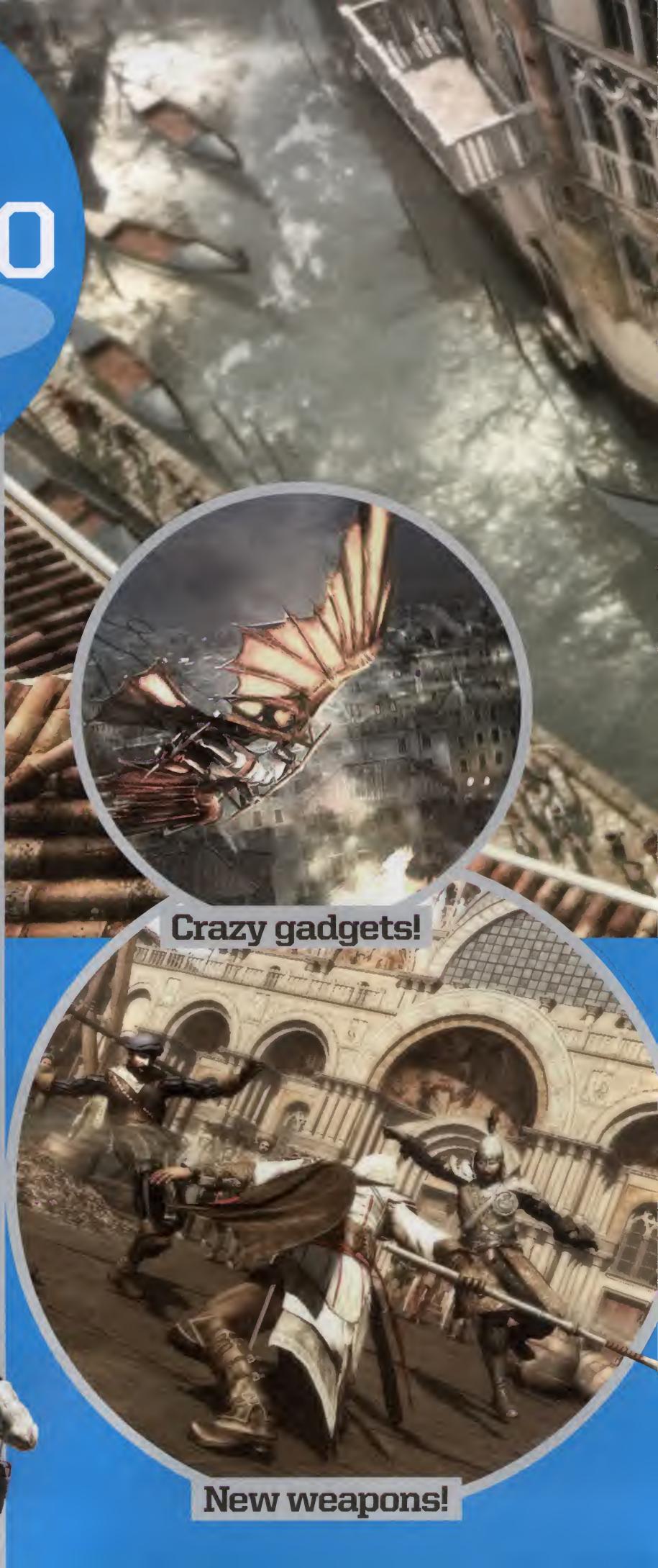
► **Page 20**



Rip-off DLC

Did Capcom treat us fairly with Resi 5?

► **Page 25**



Crazy gadgets!



New weapons!

**Water, baby**

Unlike his ancestor Altair, new hero Ezio has all his swimming badges. Dive into a Venetian canal and he can swim like a parkour-loving dolphin. You can also evade capture by ducking under, or haul guards into the drink for an easy kill.



1 Death in Venice

Assassin's Creed II tools up for an Italian job

Man on a mission

The chief complaint levelled at the original game was its limited number of mission variants - pickpocket, eavesdrop, pickpocket, slip into coma. The sequel promises an expanded repertoire of 16 types, with the emphasis on active objectives. So more stabbing, less sitting. You also won't have to keep schlepping back to the Assassin's bureau for work. Missions are now handed out by a GTA-style network of contacts.

**Dev talk**

"We think of it like linked sausages, where one mission is connected to the next. The current plan is for a total of about 200."

Patrice Desilets
Creative director,
Ubisoft Montreal

the man held captive in 2012 who has to relive all his ancestors' murderous memories.)

The game plays out against a backdrop of warring city states, with the secretive Templar and Assassins vying to influence the shape of history.

Tellingly, the team at Ubisoft Montreal has listened to fan feedback and kept what made the first game great (clambering around stunning scenery), but also improved what didn't work. Unlike Altair, Ezio can use a

wide range of weapons, disarming his enemies and killing them in a single smooth move. Being a charmer, he can also hide in any crowd as opposed to just monks. In fact, he's quite the Renaissance man. So much so that his gadgets, from his dual concealed blades to that flying contraption, are supplied by none other than Leonardo Da Vinci - just one of many real historical characters set to flesh out the juicy storyline. We honestly can't wait for this one.



Assassin's Creed 2 is due out this Christmas. For more, go to assassinscreed.us.ubi.com/assassins-creed-2.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Marine!



Predator!



Alien!

012





2 Who will you play as in AVP?

It's Alien, Predator or Marine in Sega's new sci-fi shooter

AVP - a love story

Aliens and Predators first starred together in comics in 1989, but it wasn't until 1994 that Rebellion created *Aliens vs Predator* for the Atari Jaguar console. Since then Rebellion has worked on four different AVP games. The first film starring the warring ETs, wasn't released until much later - *Alien vs Predator* hit cinemas in 2004. Jason Kingsley, CEO of Rebellion Games says, "You could argue that the AVP films were, in fact, influenced by our previous games!"

So what's it to be then? Acid for blood, bespoke cloaking device or trusty pulse rifle? It's a tough call, but one you've got to make in Sega's new *Aliens vs Predator* game, in which you can play as any of the three species from the sci-fi franchise.

Jason Kingsley, CEO of developer Rebellion reckons Predator is the way to go. He tells us he loves "watching people's faces when they first see a head ripped off by the Predator and hearing the swearing over the headset from the poor b***ard I just decapitated!" The Aliens and Marines will have their strengths too, and

Kingsley promises that tearing around as a double-mouthed Xenomorph will be just as fun as going bug hunting as the Marines. "Instantly the player knows roughly what they need to press to do what, making it simple to jump between species on the fly - useful for certain multiplayer modes!" Species swapping mid deathmatch? Sounds like madness. The sexy kind.

In single-player the stories of the three factions intertwine. Humans have colonised a planet, unaware that millions of years ago it was Predator territory. And it turns out the

Predators aren't aware of the three-second rule, because they're none too happy about it. No word on how the Aliens are involved in the turf war yet, but expect gore and macho movie quotes in equal measure.

AVP isn't out until 2010, so there's plenty of time to make your choice. According to Kingsley, the nervous among you should avoid playing as the Marines: "We want to scare the hell out of players when they're the Marine. We know what we're doing - prepare to be scared!" What, now?

Get some bug-hunting practice in with this (very) cheap and cheerful Flash game snipurl.com/fhqr7.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



3

Shock and awkward?

Konami's Fallujah shooter draws flak

Atomic power
Six Days In Fallujah is being developed by Atomic Games, a studio from North Carolina with a history of producing realistic shooters and strategy games for PC. Interestingly, the studio is a privately held corporation whose investors include In-Q-Tel, a venture capital firm funded by the CIA. An gritty Iraq war shooter funded by the American Intelligence Agency? Roger that.

Uh, too soon guys? That's what we wondered when Konami unveiled its gritty new third-person shooter, *Six Days In Fallujah*. The game is based on the real events of Operation Phantom Fury, the 2004 US Marines offensive against insurgency forces in the Iraqi town.

Mission accomplished

The announcement swiftly drew criticism from Gulf war veterans (and, inevitably, the *Daily Mail*). "It's much too soon to start making videogames about a war that's still going on," said Colonel Tim Collins, who fought with the First Battalion Royal Irish Regiment during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In light of this reaction, Konami's European bosses are still debating whether to release

the game here. However, the Japanese publisher argues that it is not an insensitive glorification of war – it's being made with the input of 36 Fallujah veteran marines (and unspecified 'contributions' from civilians and insurgents), and is told from a 'documentary perspective', which presumably means more harsh realities and fewer explosions. "Our opportunity for insight goes up dramatically when we can present the dilemmas that faced these soldiers," explains Peter Tamte of developer Atomic Games.

While we're not expecting *Generation Kill* levels of sadness and insight, this does at least sound interesting, and although the subject matter is raw, it's unquestionably important. The game will be squad-based, with co-op campaign and online versus modes. We'll pass on further intel as we get it.

Six Days In Fallujah is currently scheduled for release on PlayStation 3 this autumn.



The weird world of Keita Takahashi

We talk to the creator of Noby Noby Boy and Katamari Damacy about game design and PS3s on the moon

Park life

In 2007, during his keynote presentation at Nottingham's Gamecity Festival, Takahashi mentioned that he wanted to create a children's playground. The local council liked the idea and proposed the Lakeside Arts Centre as a site. According to Takahashi the project is on hold, but he's been speaking to officials about the project and it's "still happening".

016

The first thing we notice when meeting eccentric developer Keita Takahashi is that he's really shy. Actually, the *first* thing we notice is the brightly coloured Noby Noby Boy mitten and scarf combo he's wearing, the head and tail forming gloves while the body makes up the scarf. He's holding it tightly under his chin, giggling quietly as he answers our questions. Like how did he come up with the idea for NNB? "I try to observe and see things that people don't see. I saw a dog lead,

simple, fun and intuitive. So in my mind it's always something physical in the end." Does his background in sculpting influence his work? He often cites painters and architects as influences, rather than games... "The artists that influence me work freely and I want the same thing: to be free in my creation. It's important to me." Does he have any guiding rules when developing? "There are three principles. One is trying to finish with the idea I had at the beginning. The



Dev bio

Keita Takahashi studied sculpture, building, among other things, a table that turned into a robot. His first game, Katamari Damacy, was created at the Namco Digital Hollywood Game Lab, an educational project.

"I wanted PlayStation 3 released on the moon so that the aliens can play it."

stretching, and that was how NNB was found." Was it hard to explain such an unusual idea during development? "I don't only use words. I asked my mum to create the NNB scarf and mittens to show the team. I draw things. Some people give me ideas; it's not just my thing. When I created Katamari Damacy that was a flash. I was walking home from my office and I just got the inspiration in my head. But when I created NNB I had a team to discuss what would be interesting. The approach was really different."

Shape shifter

Both games are quite physical – Katamari Damacy involves rolling a ball, NNB stretching a tube. We asked Takahashi if he prefers these tactile concepts? "I want to do something

second is to listen to other people. And number three is to be objective."

One of NNB's more interesting features is that the collective length of everyone's stretchy 'Boy' hero contributes to the size of a single 'Girl' – a lone character who grows as people play, unlocking new levels as she expands to reach different planets in the universe. The only problem is that she's not growing as fast as Takahashi originally predicted. It doesn't bother him though, "I'm not worried if Girl grows fast or slow, either way the result will be interesting. To do

the whole solar system and return to Earth, at the pace now, will take 820 years." At least Girl is making progress and Takahashi has been inspired by her adventures, "When Girl reached the moon I wanted PS3 released on the moon so that the aliens can play it. I asked Sony to make a press release but it didn't happen. It would have been interesting to say we'd sold a million PS3s on the moon." Just as well really. We can do without the format fanboys fighting for lunar dominance at this point.

Get a taste for Takahashi's brand of gaming madness and keep track of how far Girl is growing at o-o.jp.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about





The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

■ Single player looks incredible – see! We'll have multiplayer shots next month.



018

5

"You're going to sh*t your pants"

Uncharted 2 developer seems excited about new features

Only on PS3

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves is one of many first-party exclusives lined up for PS3 this year. First there's this month's cover game, inFamous (read the review on p82), the return of Ratchet & Clank in A Crack In Time, plus Gran Turismo 5 and MAG, which are both due before Christmas. Going into 2010 there's the likes of Heavy Rain and the mighty God Of War III to look forward to, plus plenty of stuff that's still under wraps for now.

Our love for Uncharted has reached the point where we regularly talk about what it would be like to be special friends with the game's hero Nathan Drake. ("He'd make you feel so safe!") So how could we resist when developer Naughty Dog invited the world's press to a swanky hotel on LA's Sunset Boulevard to see the sequel's new multiplayer modes?

There, we witnessed the unveiling of three of the multiplayer modes that will complement Nathan Drake's new,

snow-whipped, single-player story when Uncharted 2: Among Thieves is released towards the end of the year. The first two modes will be familiar to anybody who's ever picked up a Sixaxis – team deathmatch and capture the flag (or Plunder as it's known in the world of Uncharted). Both look impressively slick and polished – no mean feat for a third-person action game, which, as the development team was keen to point out, are a bit more difficult to get

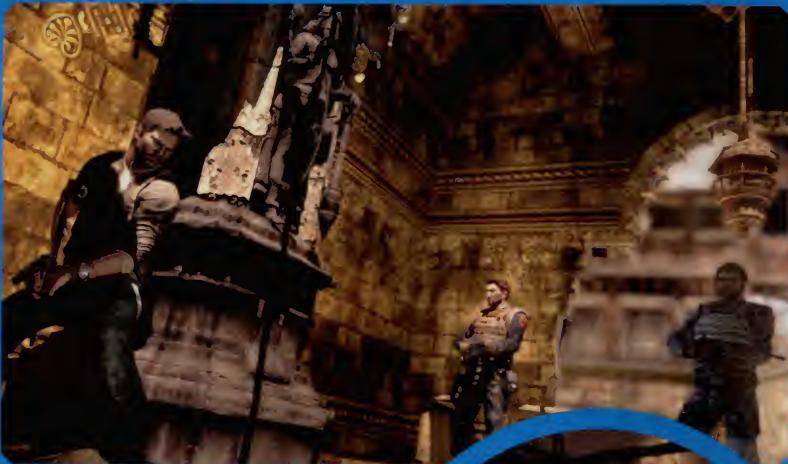
working sweetly online than the average first-person shooter.

Three-way fun

The action was intense but entertaining: during the demonstration, up to ten players (five per team) could take part at any time, either trying to shoot everybody else to death, or trying to lug a heavy Inca-style treasure back to base camp. Either way, it was all impeccably lag-free and easy to get

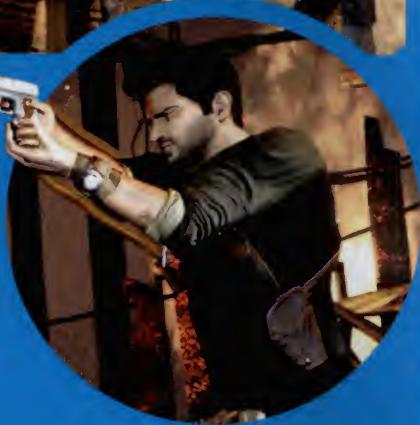


■ Multiplayer utilises the same lavishly detailed environments as the game's solo story.



into. Imagine the superbly accessible controls of the original Uncharted: Drake's Fortune applied to the most polished multiplayer game that you can think of and you're halfway there.

But the third multiplayer mode was where the most interesting action was – a co-operative mission that saw teams of three players apiece working together to take down the bad guys and grab the treasure. Shoot-outs against waves of enemies; brutal looking mini-bosses; deadly sniper alleys; and bits that require all three players to co-ordinate their movements to proceed were just some of the highlights of the co-op action, taking place across areas borrowed from the single-player game and redesigned with group gameplay in mind. Naughty Dog is currently keeping map specifics to a minimum for now, but we did see the sort of slightly ruined and verdant urban scene that you might see somewhere in South America. A location seemingly at odds with



the Himalayan environments we've seen so far. A Drake's Fortune throwback, perhaps?

As for fresh info on the single-player game, for now Naughty Dog is giving nothing away. But according to game director Bruce Straley, "There's some kickass single-player stuff coming up, that's all I'll say. Soon you're going to s**t your pants. We're giving out diapers at that event." Dude, we're already wearing them.

Uncharted 2 is due at the end of the year. Watch this space for more info about the single-player campaign.

6 PES upping its game

Pro Evo 2010 set to fix AI woes at last

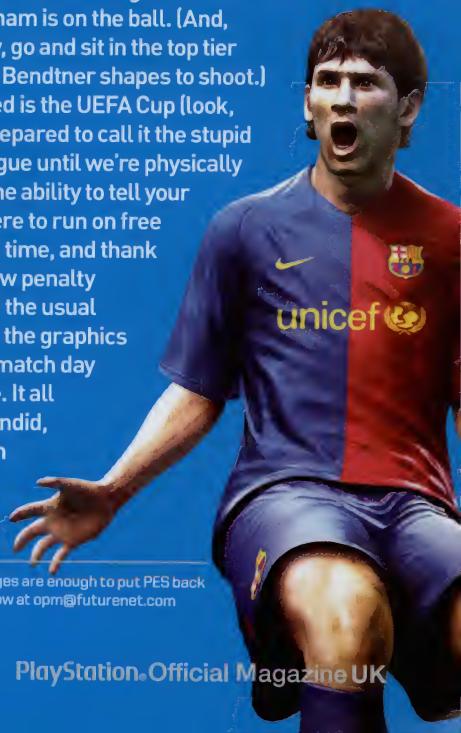
"It's balls!" "No, it's great!" "It's BALLS!" "No, it's GREAT!" Whichever side of the PES 2009 debate you're on, one thing is clear: there's still plenty of room for improvement from Pro Evo's once unparalleled, now not-so-much footy series. And in PES 2010, that means Konami focusing on what they're calling "real football simulation". Wait, exactly what sport where they trying to imitate before?

Marked men

Mercifully, a key component in this mirroring of real footy is completely reworked defensive AI, which should *finally* put an end to your backline aimlessly roaming the area like a four-piece Fabrizio Coloccini tribute act. Keepers are more versatile (this probably just means their pan hands will stretch a bit further, but we live in hope), and players are smarter when looking for ways to attack. A big step forwards is that they'll act on teammates' specific strengths – so your boys will flood the box when a good crosser like David Beckham is on the ball. (And, presumably, go and sit in the top tier when Nicky Bendtner shapes to shoot.)

Also added is the UEFA Cup (look, we're not prepared to call it the stupid Europa League until we're physically forced to), the ability to tell your players where to run on free kicks (about time, and thank Christ), a new penalty system, and the usual upgrades to the graphics engine and match day atmosphere. It all sounds splendid, Konami. Can we have a go now, please?

Think these changes are enough to put PES back on top? Let us know at opm@futurenet.com



7

The PlayStation Periodic Table

Chemistry meets characters in our guide to the gaming elements. Try to name them all

Double science would have been less crushing if we'd been taught this version of the periodic table. Instead of useless old elements like hafnium, niobium and, uh, oxygen, each square of our version represents a PlayStation character, from the big names like God Of War's Kratos to obscure stars, like Yajirobe from Dragon Ball: Origins. (We got desperate.)

War's Kratos to obscure stars, like Yajirobe from Dragon Ball: Origins. (We got desperate.)

Name game

You'll never appreciate how many thousands of characters make up the PlayStation world



Elements

H Jimmy Hopkins from Bully
He Heavy Weapons Guy from Team Fortress 2
Li Julius Little from Saints Row
Be Beatrix from Eternal Sonata
B Agent Bloodrayne from Bloodrayne
C Cloud from Final Fantasy VII
N Nathan Hale from Resistance 2
O Okami from Okami
F Faith from Mirror's Edge
Ne Necromorph from Dead Space
Na Narko from Heavenly Sword
Mg Mega Man from Mega Man 9
Al Alucard from Castlevania
Si Sim from The Sims 2
P PaRappa from PaRappa The Rapper
S Spyro from Spyro: A Hero's Tail
Cl Clark from Ratchet & Clank
Ar Ashley Riot from Vagrant Story
K King from All Cosmos from Katakuri Damacy
Ca Carl 'CJ' Johnson from GTA: San Andreas
Sc Sonic The Hedgehog from Sonic Unleashed
Ti Shaak Ti from Star Wars: The Force Unleashed
V Vilewulf Joe from Viewtiful Joe
Cr Crash Bandicoot from Crash Of The Titans
Mn Mon from Dark Cloud 2
Fe Sir Daniel Fortesque from MediEvil
Co Don Corleone from The Godfather: The Game
Ni Mattias Nilsson from Mercenaries 2
Cu Chizuru Kagura from King Of Fighters XII
Zn Zangief from Street Fighter IV
Ga Gage Logan from Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror
Ge Gex from Gex
As Altair from Assassin's Creed



Se Sev from Killzone 2
Br Baraka from Mortal Kombat 2
Kr Kratos from God Of War
Rb Robot from Jumping Flash!
Sr Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII
Y Yoshitsune from Genji: Days Of The Blade
Zr Winston Zeddemore from Ghostbusters
Nb Niko Bellic from Grand Theft Auto IV

Mo Mickey Mouse from Kingdom Hearts
Tc Taisha Cf from Dynasty Warriors 6
Ryu Ryu from Street Fighter IV
Rh Ryu Hayabusa from Ninja Gaiden Sigma
Pd Pandora from Guitar Hero: World Tour
Ag Agent 47 from Hitman
Cd Cacodemon from Doom
In Indiana Jones from Lego Indiana Jones

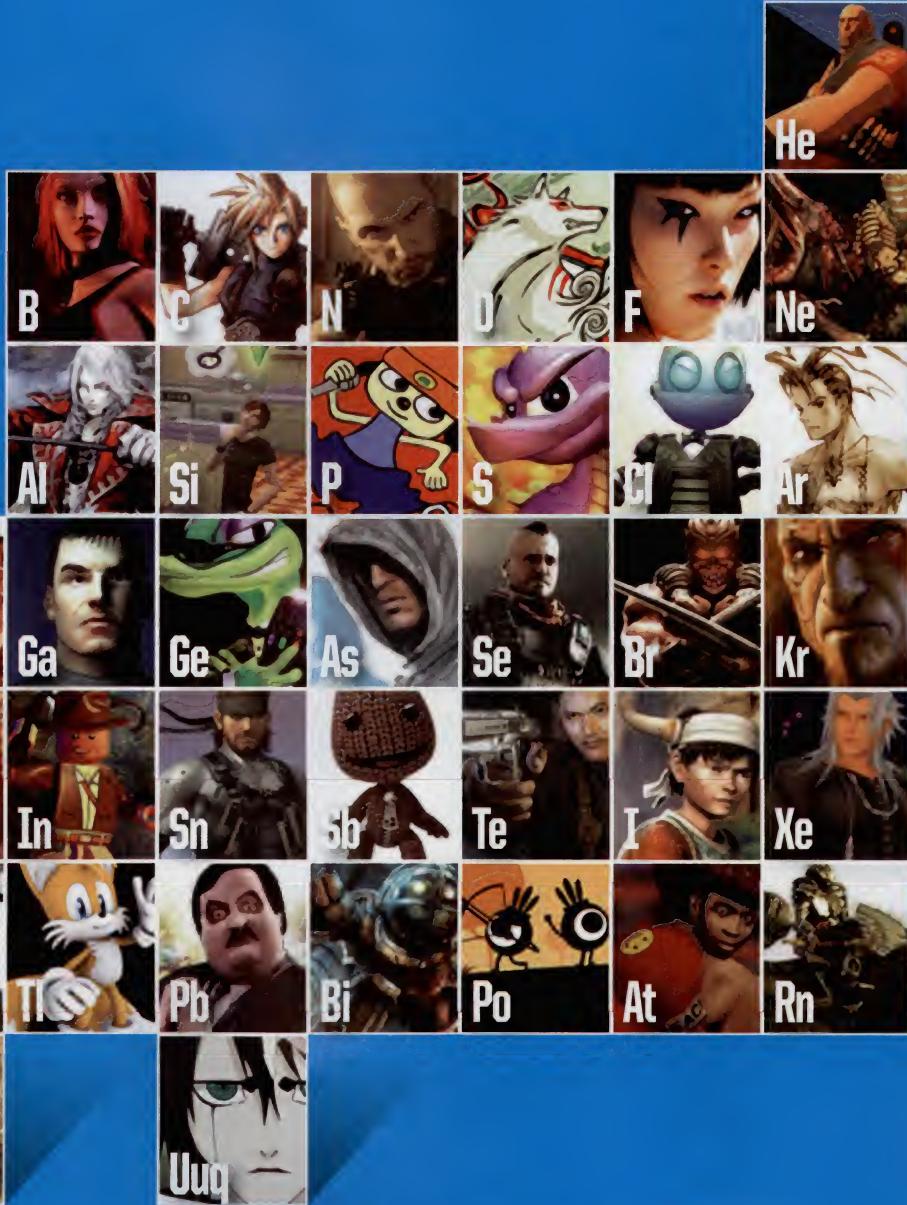
Sn Solid Snake from Metal Gear Solid
Sb Sackboy from LittleBigPlanet
Te Tequila Yuen from Stranglehold
Uko from Ico
Xe Xernitas from Kingdom Hearts
Cs Cryptosporidium from Destroy All Humans!
Ba Batman from Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe
Lu Liu Kang from Mortal Kombat: Deception

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



until you've searched for one with the letters UUQ in their name. We can't take all the credit though. This version was created just for us by Orin Shepherd, who created a similar multiformat version for his website iheartchaos.com.



021



Hf James Hetfield from *Guitar Hero: Metallica*
Ta Tank from *Tiny Tank*
W Worm from *Worms*
Re Rena from *Star Ocean: The Second Story*
Os Oswald from *Odin Sphere*
Ir Irav from *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*
Pt Lt. Jimmy Patterson from *Medal Of Honor*

Au Auron from *Final Fantasy X*
Hg Hwoarang from *Tekken 5*
Tl Tails from *Sega Superstars Tennis*
Pb Paul Bearer from *WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania*
Bi Big Daddy from *Bioshock*
Po Patapon from *Patapon*

Afro Thunder from *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*
Rn Rohn from *Lair*
Fr Gordon Freeman from *Half-Life 2*
Ra Raz from *Psychonauts*
Lr Locoroco from *Locoroco*
Rf Chris Redfield from *Resident Evil 5*
Db Diablo from *Diablo*

Sg Serge from *Chrono Cross*
Bh Bahamut from *Final Fantasy IX*
Hs Han Solo from *Star Wars Battlefront 2*
Mt Mike Tyson from *Fight Night Round 4*
Ds Doctors Don and Dan from *Point Blank*
Rg Regina from *Dino Crisis*
Uub Uruk-Hai Brawler from *LOTR: Conquest*
Uuq Uquiorra Schiffer from *Bleach: Heat The Soul*
La Lara Croft from *Tomb Raider: Underworld*
Ce Cervantes from *Spiculebra IV*
Pr The Prince from *Prince Of Persia*
Nd Nathan Drake from *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*
Pm Preston Marlow from *Battlefield: Bad Company*
Sm Soap McTavish from *Call Of Duty 4*
Eu Eulogy Jones from *Fallout 3*
Gd General Driplik from *Abe's Oddysee*
Ty Tycho Brae from *Penny Arcade Adventures*
Dy Daisy from *We Love Katamarai*
Ho Earthworm Jim from *Earthworm Jim*
Er Earthworm Jim from *Earthworm Jim 2*
Tm Tomba from *Tombal*
Yb Yajirobe from *The Dragon Ball: Origins*
Ac Armored Core suit from *Armored Core 4*
Th Tony Hawk from *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground*
Pa Pai Chan from *Virtua Fighter 5*
Ul Lammy from *Um Jammer Lammy*
No Napoleon Bonaparte from *Civilization Revolution*
Pu Punky from *Punki Skunk*
Am Alma from *FEAR*
Cm Cheryl Mason from *Shirt Hill*
Bk Black Mage from *Final Fantasy IX*
Cf Caffeine from *Samurai Showdown*
Es Etsuko from *Incredible Crisis*
Fm Freddie Mercury from *SingStar Queen*
Md Mundus from *Devil May Cry*
No Noby Noby Boy from *Noby Noby Boy*

8

The secrets of Modern Warfare 2

Locations and new perks revealed in teaser movie

The big reveal

By the time you read this we will have met up with Infinity Ward studio head Vince Zampella and community manager Robert Bowling for an exclusive preview of Modern Warfare 2. So if you want to know everything about the game and read interviews with its creators then be sure to pick up issue 33 of OPM, which is on sale 9 June.

Like us, you've no doubt been staring hard at the teaser video for Modern Warfare 2. Hurts your eyes doesn't it? But in amongst the fizzy green oscilloscope lines, there are big gameplay hints to be gleaned, like a terrorist attack on an airport. Here's what else we've deduced...



Dev talk

"There's a lot of stuff in the teaser but people haven't realised. It'll make sense when you see it in-game."

Robert Bowling
Community manager,
Infinity Ward

1 Collateral damage

The opening scene is set in an airport full of people. Civilians have always been conspicuously absent from the COD franchise. Mainly because of the original Second World War setting, and also to keep the age rating down. Infinity Ward, however, has always been keen to make a more adult game, so could Modern Warfare 2 see shoot-outs in public places? Several of the locations hinted at in the trailer are far from military – more like small towns and cities.

2 The Russians are back

It looks like they're the bad guys again. In the build up to the airport attack one man can be heard saying, "God is with us," in a foreign language before being told in English, "Remember, no Russian." At the end of the trailer more Russian can be heard which translates as, "A revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation." It's part of a Lenin quote. Could the Ultranationalists from the previous game be on the warpath again?



FOR EVERY BEGINNING THERE IS A FUTURE

EVERY SEASON ON DVD NOW ON SALE AT STELLAR PRICES!

STAR TREK™
THE ORIGINAL SERIES

STAR TREK™
THE NEXT GENERATION™

STAR TREK™
THE ANIMATED SERIES

STAR TREK™
DEEP SPACE NINE™

STAR TREK™
VOYAGER™

STAR TREK™
ENTERPRISE



Dates, artwork and availability subject to change without notice.

TM & © 2009 CBS Studios Inc. STAR TREK and related marks are trademarks of CBS Studios Inc. CBS and related marks are trademarks of CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved. © 2009 Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Subject to availability and subject to change or withdrawal without notice. Prices and information are correct at time of going to print and are subject to change without notice. Prices exclude postage and packaging. Postage and packaging is applied to each item in accordance with Amazon.co.uk's standard delivery rates and policies. We offer Free Super Saver Delivery and unlimited free One-Day Delivery with Amazon Prime, both subject to terms and conditions. Terms and conditions apply – see www.amazon.co.uk for details.



NSA Image

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



3 It's in Brazil, Russia and Europe

Russia is definitely a location: the trailer's called 'Siberia' for starters, and it's backed up by shots of buildings buried in deep snow. One brief frame shows the outline of Christ The Redeemer, a massive statue in Brazil. There are also some Favelas, South American hillside shanty towns to confirm it. Less definitive is what looks like somewhere in central Europe: a tram and some English language shop signs. There's also a suspiciously British looking castle...

4 The Navy SEALs are involved

Frogmen appear several times and are seen swimming, possibly as part of an undersea insertion. There are also shots of navy ships, submarines and an

oil rig. The implication is that part of the campaign could feature the SEALs assaulting terrorists at sea.

5 There are new Perks

During the opening airport scene a sign can be seen hanging from the ceiling. Closer examination reveals that it's made up of four Perk symbols. The first is Stopping Power, which returns from the previous game. The next three, however, are new. There's a foot with wings attached (faster movement?), two crossed weapons, possibly knives or rifles (dual wielding?) and an arrow pointing down at a circle which is a military symbol for an air strike (perhaps giving the ability to survive one in multiplayer?). Crucially there are four slots in total, which is one more than the original Modern Warfare.

6 Zombies aren't necessarily in

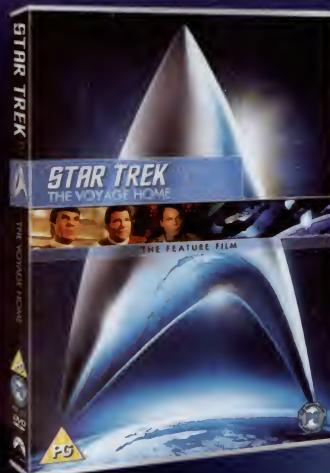
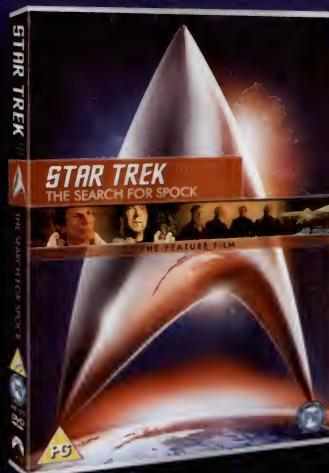
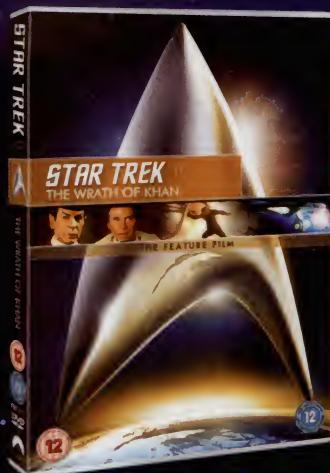
Squint very carefully and you'll see a teddy bear flash past amidst the tanks and explosions. Many forum posters have taken that to mean World At War's Nazi Zombies (or a variation on them) will appear in Modern Warfare 2, because it features a teddy bear in one map. That's not necessarily the case, though – there have been hidden teddy bears dotted around COD levels since the beginning.

7 Vehicles are in

Tanks appear and there's also the outline of some Humvees and helicopters. Whether these will be drivable or just there to ride along in remains to be seen, but they feature too heavily not to play a part.

Scour the trailer and see what hidden secrets you can discover at modernwarfare2.infinityward.com.

DIGITALLY REMASTERED AND DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1 SURROUND EX!



ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

SET TO STUN ON DVD & BLU-RAY NOW

amazon.co.uk



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Posted by Steven



Posted by Louie



Posted by Ale



Posted by Rob



Posted by Leon



Posted by Thomas



Posted by Johan



Posted by Kerwin



Posted by Michael



Posted by Richard



Posted by Gilbert



Posted by Chris



Posted by Julian



Posted by Shannon



Posted by James



Posted by David



Posted by Cat



Posted by Justin



Posted by David



Posted by Chris



Posted by Richard



Posted by Luka



Posted by Andrzej



Posted by Chris



Posted by Thom



Posted by Marcus



Posted by Mark



Posted by Marcus



Posted by Fernando



Posted by Chins



Posted by David



Posted by Ryan

9

Let them eat cake

Fans stuff their faces for the Fat Princess beta

Looking at the icing-covered loons above, you might think we've stumbled across some sort of gaming/bakery crossover fetish site. No such luck. They're actually entries to the Fat Princess beta photo challenge.

The Official US PlayStation Blog had 250 closed beta codes to give away, and decided they only wanted the most dedicated Fat Princess fans, so they set them a challenge. The first 250 people to upload pictures of themselves eating cake would get a beta code. Simple. The only rule was that you had to be near, holding or wearing some sort of PlayStation accessories, just so the judges could be sure people were posting actual photos of themselves. Look closely and you can spot a fan who used our holographic Killzone 2 wallet.

As we type this, 460 photos can be seen on the PlayStation.Blog Facebook album, and

despite the fact the 250 beta keys are already gone, people are still posting. It's become less about the beta codes, and more about showing love for the unreleased PSN game which features dessert-themed levels, rotund royals and lots of gore. As always though, alongside the happy faces there are tales of heartache. "I think I was, like, the 257th photo," posts one fan. "I would have been earlier but I actually had to go out and buy a cake, costing me valuable minutes."

Sugar rush

It just goes to show how much fun you can have with baked goods and a camera. Be warned though: next time we get beta codes to hand out, you'll have to do something a whole lot worse than eating Victoria sponge.

To see all the frosting-coated snaps for yourself, log on to Facebook and head to the PlayStation.Blog fan page.



Sweet deal

The winner by some distance, he's both playing PSP in work hours and being spoon-fed by an actual real-life pretty lady.

10 Is Resi 5's versus mode DLC a rip-off?

OPM's top guns discuss Capcom's downloadable content

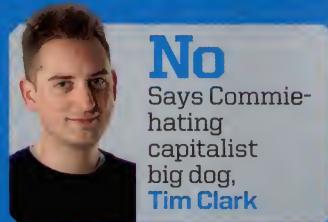


025

It was the timing that was the problem. Announced so soon after Resident Evil 5's release, the news that the online 'versus' was a paid-for download rather than a free patch was always going to send the internet into apoplexy. And, sure enough, the idea of having to pay £3.99 had forum posters throwing themselves to the floor and tearing at their hair. But if the content had arrived six months down the line nobody would have moaned.

Cash for content

Because Resi 5 is exactly as Capcom promised it would be: brilliant in its single-player mode, even better in online co-op, and with the added bonus of the near infinitely replayable Mercenaries mini-game perched like an explosive glace cherry on top. Only MGS4 offers comparable value. So rather than getting all worked up over the DLC – an optional extra – you should be



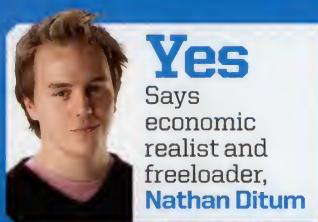
No

Says Commie-hating capitalist big dog, **Tim Clark**

asking why other full-priced games fail to offer a fraction of Resi 5's entertainment.

The fact of the matter is that games are crazy expensive to make, they take an enormous amount of time (Resident Evil 5 took *four years*) and most of them don't even make money. People point to Burnout Paradise as an example of how they think DLC should be done. But here's the news: free is a broken business model. What Criterion did, and brilliantly, was to build and service a fanbase with free content. But now those same punters are being asked to pay up. We are not communists, after all.

Happy to cough up for some quality extra content? Text Versus No to 87474.



Yes

Says economic realist and freeloader, **Nathan Ditum**

Ethics! Like religion, politics, and running a moonshine operation in prohibition-era America, that's what this whole thing comes down to. It doesn't matter if consumers were happy with the original release of Resi 5, or whether they thought it represented good value for money. Consumers also eat themselves into obesity, smoke themselves to death, and buy X-Factor singles at Christmas. They're idiots.

No charge

The *really* important thing here is an invisible line. An invisible line in allegorical sand, which I'm about to draw for you right now. There's a difference between Capcom charging me

– us, everyone, the people! – for what might even be a very very excellent online versus mode and, say, Criterion charging for their premium Burnout downloads. Why? They're both released after the boxed game, and are great to play, right? Here's that line: it's because Criterion made the stuff they're charging for long after the game itself was finished, boxed up and in the shops. Capcom, on the other hand, announced their pay-for content just a couple of weeks after Resi was released – hardly time to go away and make new stuff.

The bottom line is that Resi's DLC was always factored into the cost and production time of the game itself. It didn't cost them anything extra to produce – and that, in a weird moral hang-up way, is why paying for it stings so badly. That, and the fact that paying for anything, ever, sucks. Free stuff!

Reckon Resi 5's new versus mode is a massive rip-off? Text Versus Yes to 87474.

Agenda

PlayStation news,
views, happenings
and people...

26 **Informer**

Big game issues
investigated
by OPM's crack team.

28 **Culture**

The PlayStation
people who make
gaming great.

30 **Personal**

Hot opinion from
those in the know.

31 **Tech**

Shiny things you
can't live without.

32 **Sony**

New kit beamed
down from the
Sony mothership.

34 **Events**

Your gamer's
guide to the
month ahead.



Can OnLive really work?

Five problems the new cloud computing gaming service must overcome

Star of this year's Game Developer Conference was a brand new gaming platform known simply as OnLive – a true paradigm shift in the concept of buying and playing videogames. Rather than purchase a new console, or PC, players simply hook up over the internet to pre-existing high-end gaming servers boasting specs way in advance of any home console. Video of the gameplay hosted on the server is streamed to your computer (or else a tiny 'micro console' that hooks up to your HDTV) with your control inputs sent back to the server.

Access all areas

The advantages are obvious: anyone, anywhere, gets access to ultra-powerful gaming hardware. You pay as you play, meaning no more game-buying and an end to software piracy. And you need never upgrade your PC or console again. It's down to OnLive to upgrade their servers to cope with the innovations in gaming technology.

The problem with this vision of gaming nirvana is that the technical achievements required to meet the spec OnLive has posted are so technologically advanced that it can't possibly be viable... can it? While it's clear that there's a future for this kind of service – Sony is believed to be looking into something similar – the spec that OnLive touts sounds too good to be true. In theory, this is the future of gaming, and if the guys at OnLive can pull it off, we're looking at one of the most astonishing technical marvels of our age. Because in order to meet OnLive's claims, there are some key issues the tech will need to overcome...

OnLive would put an end to buying discs for your games, but dry your eyes Mr Games Retailer, we're a long way off from it yet.



RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

Latency

This is the time it takes for data to be sent from you, to the server, and back again. Some say that latency (or 'lag') will never be beaten owing to a limiting factor known as 'the speed of light'. In OnLive's case, the problems are manifold: sending and receiving data takes time... encoding and decoding video and audio does too. Current systems like PSN use clever code on both the server and the player's side to predict what's going to happen to help eliminate lag. As the gamer's hardware in OnLive is basically a dumb terminal, processing video and control input alone, that won't be possible. How can OnLive beat lag? The company's technical statements so far have been somewhat lacking in detail.

Video compression

PSN videos and services like BBC iPlayer use advanced compression. To get the best picture quality at a low data rate, elements from frames of past and future video are re-used on the current image (data is being prepared before it arrives). OnLive requires ultra-fast video, but with no future data on-hand (it's impossible to predict future images in games because you're controlling the action) this won't be possible. The maths is also puzzling. OnLive promise 720p video at 60fps on a 5mbps net connection. That's 640K a second, just 10,922 bytes of data to update a frame of 921,600 pixels, while streaming six channels of surround sound. That would be a world first.

Infrastructure

The theory behind OnLive is that powerful PC gaming hardware is held server-side and you share it with other gamers. When you're not using it, the chances are that somebody else will be. But how is this going to work when most people play games on the weekend, or after school/work? And what about when a hugely anticipated release (let's say Grand Theft Auto V) is released and everyone wants to play at exactly the same time? Will you simply have to wait your turn? Just the expense of running so many high-end PCs is absolutely staggering. Does OnLive really have billion-dollar sized pockets to pay for all of this - particularly in the current economic climate?

Internet instability

We live in a world of shared internet connections requiring plenty of bandwidth, making for an often sub-optimal connection. We share bandwidth at home, across our neighbourhoods, at the ISP we're connected to... Is the infrastructure there to cope with OnLive? When basic voice-chat systems like Skype can fall over at the drop of a hat, how is an ultra high-end system like OnLive going to cope?

Occam's Razor

This rule of logic states that the simplest explanation is more often than not the right one. Every piece of conventional wisdom says that OnLive - according to the specs laid out by the company itself - is light years ahead of the competition in multiple technological fields. OnLive needs to have out-smarted the best compression experts in the world, created encoding hardware that out-performs the systems used in the broadcast industry and out-thought the greatest experts on internet connectivity. If that all sounds rather implausible, Occam's Razor suggests it probably is.

The Darkness developer, Starbreeze, is working on a PS3 version of classic isometric strategy game, Syndicate.

The first game from new studio LightBox Interactive is thought to be Starhawk, a space-based successor to Warhawk.

The Beatles edition of Rock Band will feature harmonising, allowing more than one singer and one mic per song.

Final Fantasy XIII will be out in time for Christmas in Japan.

Dust off your decks, Activision's DJ Hero will feature contributions from Daft Punk and DJ Shadow.

Gran Turismo 5 will feature upwards of 600 cars and a staggering 96 race tracks.

Sony has at least two massive surprises in store for this year's E3 press conference in June.



Cold as ice

Now *this* is cosplay

We're not always sure how we feel about gamers dressing up, but there's something magical - Christmassy even - about these pics of Frost from Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance. The young lady doing such sterling work for the cosplay cause is French Canadian model Marie-Claude Bourbonnais.

In the past Bourbonnais has posed as Caitlin Fairchild from the comic book series Gen, and shown off a number of, uh, latex outfits. She's into anime big time, and a genuine Mortal Kombat fan. "I've kept all the codes from MK1, MK2 and MK3 in a book!" She loved everything about playing Frost. "Hey, she's hot!" says Bourbonnais. "Or cold? Anyway, the only negative point is my lack of real fighting skills and freezing powers." Frankly, we don't think anyone is looking at her Deep Freeze Kick.

She's already planning future photo sessions. "I don't want to do exclusively female characters, so you will also see me cosplaying as mecha, robots and creatures from other worlds..."

Hellboy?" If anyone can make red skin and a gigantic demon arm hot, it's Bourbonnais.

Ice maiden

A cold snap(shot) of Frost

Marie-Claude's inspiration, Frost, was introduced in MK Deadly Alliance. Impressed by her mad snow skillz, she was taken on by Sub Zero as his protégée, but it soon went treachery-shaped. Sadly, given publisher Midway's financial problems, it's unclear as to when we'll see any Kombatants again, although rumour has it the Chicago-based dev team is in talks to strike out on its own.

▲ See the full gallery at photogallery.gizmodo.com
Gizmodo UK

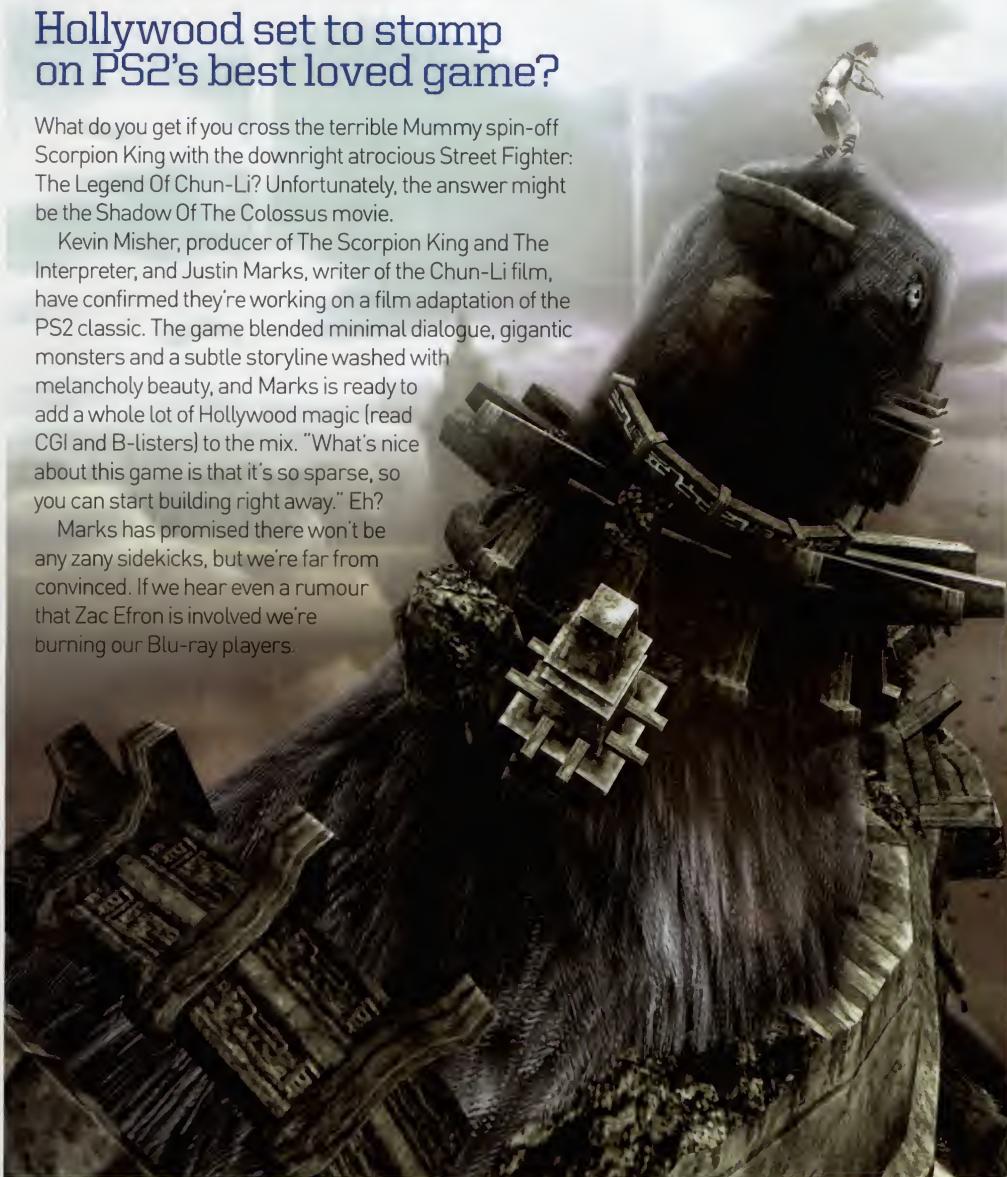
A colossal mistake?

Hollywood set to stomp on PS2's best loved game?

What do you get if you cross the terrible Mummy spin-off Scorpion King with the downright atrocious Street Fighter: The Legend Of Chun-Li? Unfortunately, the answer might be the Shadow Of The Colossus movie.

Kevin Misher, producer of The Scorpion King and The Interpreter, and Justin Marks, writer of the Chun-Li film, have confirmed they're working on a film adaptation of the PS2 classic. The game blended minimal dialogue, gigantic monsters and a subtle storyline washed with melancholy beauty, and Marks is ready to add a whole lot of Hollywood magic (read CGI and B-listers) to the mix. "What's nice about this game is that it's so sparse, so you can start building right away." Eh?

Marks has promised there won't be any zany sidekicks, but we're far from convinced. If we hear even a rumour that Zac Efron is involved we're burning our Blu-ray players.



OPM HOT TOPIC

Are you a fan of user-generated LBP levels?



Craig Sullivan
Creative director,
Criterion

"If you're someone that's trying to break into the Games Industry, I couldn't think of a better way to impress potential employers than making a fun level and showing it to them."



Gavin Carter
Lead producer,
Bethesda

"The ones I like most are the levels where people have taken other games and remade them inside LBP. I've seen brilliant Halo, Silent Hill, and Super Mario levels."



Clive Lindop
Lead AI designer,
Codemasters

"Put the ability to create content into players' hands and there's a chance something fantastic will happen. It proves that console players have the talent to do amazing things with game tools."



Ken Turner
Project director,
Creative Assembly

"I think they're absolutely brilliant. The community has really welcomed the concept, and it's amazing to see the variety in what people have to offer."

WHO SAID THAT? V.I.P. quotes

"It is a sadistically hard game." **Hideki Kamiya** wants Bayonetta to mess you up.



Ghostbuster **Harold Ramis** earns his fee:

"Game scripts are like 250 pages. A lot of it is just yelling 'Look out!'"



"I thought I was pretty good at first-person shooters. I went online and got decimated."



Seth Rogen is a total n00b.

"Can you play videogames in space?" A **school child** has his chance to talk to astronauts on the International Space Station.





Xi private detective

James Jarvis tries to solve the Home mystery...

Normally, when I mention Home (stay with me) in the office – or, God forbid, in the pub – it meets with either blank faces or outright contempt. And, okay, until recently, there hasn't been a whole lot to do in Sony's 3D networking hub. (Which also explains how I came to be a proud owner of the IceBreaker outfit and apartment statue.) But that's all changed now we have Xi. Xi! It's the world's first console-based Alternate Reality Game (or ARG in geekspeak). And I love it.

I've always been a fan of mystery and puzzles, wasting many a weekend in front of Diagnosis Murder and Jonathan Creek (the thinking man's detective show). And Xi gave me the chance to put my detective skills to the test. It started with a video – a few seconds of weird CCTV footage after the adverts on Home's big screens – and soon opened up into a whole new space within Home. I can't really explain

of people in each country have to own a PS3, they had to be online, using Home and into Xi. Given my experience, that seemed unlikely. They also had to be willing to travel to the locations we had pinpointed then report back to the community, using internet forums. Impossible. Right?

Just to be sure, I logged onto the official Home forums to have a look around. What I found was

Thanks to Xi, Home now has a real sense of community.



"Much like Jonathan Creek, I needed a partner..."

what it's about – because at time of writing I still don't know – but it involves solving little puzzles, each of which lead you on to a new puzzle or clue.

It was going well until I uncovered a series of clues which seemed to point me towards eight real-world locations around Europe. I felt crushed – it's one thing making like Columbo from the comfort of my bedroom, quite another to go outside and actually interact with stuff. What if it's raining?

But then I logged into 'the Hub', Xi's base of operations, for one final look at the puzzle. As I walked past the other confused participants I realised this wasn't a problem I was meant to solve alone. Much like Mr Creek, I'd need a partner. Not just one, but a hundred. A thousand. A whole community living in over eight countries, all working together towards the same goal.

Initially, this brought back the crushing feeling I had earlier. It meant that not only did a number

amazing. Topic upon topic of hints and tips, links to fans sites, and an entire history of the Xi experience so far. The sense of community was incredible, and I was now a part of it. I was playing an ARG at the weekend, yes, but it felt huge.

To my amazement a number of people were already on their way to some of the locations and would soon report their finds. I couldn't make a journey personally – the nearest spot to me was Birmingham New Street station – but because of the unlikely community Xi had fostered, I was still obsessed with discovering what came next. I sat refreshing pages and willing the adventurous volunteers to hurry the hell up until, six hours later, letters from each location had been found, combining into a password which unlocked the next piece of the puzzle. It felt brilliant. We, as a community, had stopped lolling and noobing and failing each other for long enough to achieve something. And it was only stage three of 20...

LETTER FROM HOME

"Die you balloon-flying idiots!" Nathan Ditum loses himself in Helicopter Hit

Aside from Xi, the most exciting thing to happen in Home all month was the arrival of the Resi 5 space, which not only supports game launching but rewards you for trying it out with little models of Resi characters for your apartment. So it's weird that I spent my time playing Helicopter Hit, the sadistic remote-controlled chopper game in the central plaza. You slice the ropes holding baskets to mini hot air balloons rising from holes in the ground so 'no one escapes alive'. It's pretty grim – the little men in the baskets scream as they plunge to their deaths – and questionable collision detection also makes it super hard. Best score: 22.





Dell Adamo Notebook

Hello, someone's been to hardware fat camp. This is Dell's attempt to out-skinny the MacBook Air – an aluminium laptop with a Heat-style 'worryingly thin' 16mm profile.

£1,400
dell.com/uk



Resident Evil 5 Watch

Beg, borrow or (likely) queue for the chance to own one of 555 limited-edition Resident Evil 5 timepieces. Or as we prefer to call them: lady repellents.

£119
gemstation.co.uk

Wrex The Dawg

Sure, he's cute, but it's singing, dancing, child-friendly robots like this that are distracting the scientists from inventing our sexy robo-wives.

£30
amazon.co.uk



Want that

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people



Parrot iPod Speakers

Yeah, another iPod dock, but one created by super swanky designer Philippe Starck. Stunning Asian girl for display purposes only.

£1,200
parrotshopping.com

BeoVision 4 Plasma HDTV

Your new godus. 103 inches of consciousness-pleasing plasma, which will (likely) recalibrate itself every 120 hours. I'm afraid I can't let you watch *Die Hard*.

£93,000
bang-olufsen.com



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press.

The facts

- 32GB Flash memory
- 3" OLED touch-screen
- WiFi (IEEE 802.11b/g)
- Continuous playback (music) approx 33hrs, (video) approx 9hrs
- S-Master Audio Digital Amplifier
- Digital Noise Cancelling
- Digital Sound Enhancement Engine



10:25PM

SONY

15sec 30sec 1min 2min 5min

The screen

Unlike the iPod Touch's LCD screen the X1060's 16:9 OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diode) panel requires no backlight, simultaneously reducing power consumption and extending battery life. What's more, the OLED screen is tougher, slimmer and boasts better contrast than Liquid Crystal. Take that, stupid spillable crystals.

The Noise

The X1060's integral Digital Noise Cancelling technology means you can blissfully block out Phoebe, Digby and Noah's bleating in All Bar One without giving the game away with bulky, powered noise-cancelling cans. Best of all, the tech also features train/bus, office and plane presets, the latter of which is so effective that it'll fake total silence in cattle class even if you don't have music playing. Result.

Sony X-Series Walkman

Fed up with iPod Touch? Alright, *pretend* you are...



£279
sonystyle.co.uk

In a nutshell

Nothing stimulates a monolithic electronics giant's appetite for market dominance like a perfect storm of breathtaking recession and coming second to a bunch of Californian techno-hippies for seven years straight in a segment of the market it created. Enter the X1060, Sony's near-frictionless whisp of portable, audiovisual willy waving. And the intended target of the waving? Apple's all-conquering iPod Touch. And you better believe the Japanese contender is going all-out to humble Steve Job's Lexan-clad legend with this: the first ever touch-screen Walkman.

What's so special?

Weighing less than a bar of Green & Blacks, the X1060 is a 32-gig media player with integrated WiFi, nets browser (another first for a Walkman), direct access to YouTube and podcast downloads, plus a quaint device called an 'Eff Em' radio. Its audio and video format compatibility list reads like a dyslexic texter's outbox, and genuinely useful hybrid controls mean you can quickly navigate the Godspeed You Black Emperor! back catalogue using 'actual' buttons, or browse/show off at your leisure using the beautiful Cover Flow-style option. And while the Walkman's three-inch OLED screen is half an inch smaller than the Touch's LCD, there's no gadget urinal shame as it's crisper, tougher and less ruinously power-hungry than Apple's.

Tell me more...

Point out to the average iPod owner that Sony's audio boffins have kept Walkman sound quality several clicks ahead of their brushed aluminium baby's for years and they'll do a good impression of Rain Man at a provincial airport. And maybe they're right to drown out infidel dissent. After all, how big a difference can a dedicated digital amplifier, Digital Sound Enhancement Engine, Clear Stereo and Clear Bass technology, and groundbreaking, integrated digital noise cancelling really make?



PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover ♦ New entry

PS3

| | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | ● | The Godfather II |
| 2 | ● | Resident Evil 5 |
| 3 | ▲ | Killzone 2 |
| 4 | ▼ | Street Fighter IV |
| 5 | ▲ | FIFA 09 |
| 6 | ▼ | Wheelman |
| 7 | ▲ | LittleBigPlanet |
| 8 | ▼ | Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare |
| 9 | ▲ | Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection |
| 10 | ▼ | Tom Clancy's HAWX |

Source chart-track.co.uk

PS2

| | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | ● | Ben 10 Alien Force |
| 2 | ● | Monsters vs Aliens |
| 3 | ● | FIFA 09 |
| 4 | ● | Call Of Duty World At War |
| 5 | ● | Tomb Raider Underworld |
| 6 | ● | PES 2009 |
| 7 | ▲ | Need For Speed Undercover |
| 8 | ▼ | WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009 |
| 9 | ▲ | Guitar Hero World Tour |
| 10 | ▲ | Persona 4 |

Source chart-track.co.uk

PSP

| | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | ● | FIFA 09 |
| 2 | ● | Resistance Retribution |
| 3 | ● | Ben 10 Alien Force |
| 4 | ● | Football Manager 2009 |
| 5 | ● | Need For Speed Undercover |
| 6 | ♦ | Phantasy Star Portable |
| 7 | ▼ | WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009 |
| 8 | ▲ | Lego Batman |
| 9 | ▼ | PES 2009 |
| 10 | ● | Midnight Club LA Remix |

Source chart-track.co.uk

The PlayStation entertainment plan

Fill up your life with our monthly guide

Monday

MAY 11

Hopelessly devoted

Olivia Newton-John gets sewn into the tightest (no-sweat of all time) as *Grease* comes to Blu-ray. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grease_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grease_(film))

Tuesday

12

Issue 33 on sale

Behold its shiny pages! Tell us what you like, love and [sob] loathe at opm@futurenet.com

Wednesday



Thursday

14

Oh God

Expect complaints from the church and cinemagoers as the sequel to *The Da Vinci Code* arrives in multiplexes today. angelsanddemons.com

Friday



Saturday

16

Topping clichés?

Tedious pizza gags from the tabs and 'squeaky bum' talk from the bosses as Man Utd face Arsenal's boy army at Old Trafford. premiedleague.com

Sunday



18

**Welsh wit**

Stacey's Uncle Bryn leaves Wales to take his comedy to the masses. Catch Rob Brydon at the Apollo Theatre in London. robrydon.com

20

Popped in

Simon Amstell takes a break from charming rock royalty on *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* to do some stand up at the Etcetera Theatre in London. simonamstell.co.uk

22

Shamed alive

British horror *Tormented* is out at the cinema and packed full of gore, death and pretty ex-Skins actresses in school uniforms. tormentedthemovie.com/

25

**Bank holiday**

If you've got *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* on PS3, spend the entire day playing it. If not, enter our competition on the opposite page. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bank_holiday

26

Charming man

Head over to the Troxy in London to see the last of the famous international playboys himself, Morrissey. itsmorriseysworld.com

29

Hell yeah

Straight out of the wilchy old lady/pretty young screamer school of horror, *Drag Me To Hell* is out at the cinema today. dragmetohell.net

30

Trophy get!

Settle down in front of the telly—or enjoy a trip to Wemb-ber-tee to watch Chelsea and Everton contest the 128th FA Cup Final. itv.com

31

Road rage

Sure, we'll miss civilisation, but at least the apocalypse can only be good news for off-roading. *Fuel* is released on PS3 today. codemasters.co.uk/games/index.php?gameid=2943



08

Cruise patched
Released on DVD today, *Valkyrie* sees tiny Tom Cruise trying to save the world again. This time he's taking on Hitler. valkyrie.unitedartists.com



JUNE 05

No fate

Humans and machines are done professionally. *Terminator Salvation* goes on UK cinema release today. warnerbros.com

13

"Just move!"

Brian O'Driscoll stars for the British & Irish Lions in their South African tour as they take on Western Province. lionsrugby.com

09 Jun
Issue 33 on sale.
Subscribe now on page 38



Win big with Wolverine

Get X-Men on PS3 and a 37-inch HDTV!

Find out how Wolverine got his adamantium claws and try them out for yourself in the new action game X-Men Origins: Wolverine. We're giving you the chance to win your very own copy for PS3. If slicing and dicing doesn't get you excited enough, the chance to see old furry face on a brand new 37-inch Samsung HDTV should sweeten the deal. Four lucky runners-up will win a copy of the game. To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question...

TERMS AND CONDITIONS By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this info please text the word 'STOP' at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at £1.50 plus your standard network rate. By taking part in a competition, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at www.futuretcs.com. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries after the start date 05/05/2009. Prize draws will take place on 10/06/2009. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the draw. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. Publicity may be given to any winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. You may have to provide additional information. Receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. No purchase necessary. Winner lists are available by written request within three months of the closing date from Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

In the film The Prestige, what career did Hugh Jackman's character have?

A ZOOKEEPER **B SOLDIER** **C MAGICIAN**

Text using the word 'Xmen' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name and address to 87474. Or enter at futurecomps.co.uk/opm32. Winners will be picked at random from all correct entries.

Closing date: 9 June 2009.



FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit OPS2 #47

A pretty lady airbrushed to within a blurred edge of unreality slouching against a fat-wheeled motor? It must be Need For Speed, with issue #47's cover celebrating our exclusive feature on **Need For Speed Underground 2**. "Underground was what you wanted," we reasoned, "And Underground 2 is what you want as well. Only more so."

Inside: much self-congratulatory back-patting about winning a number of industry awards. Then news, which began with a world-first hands on with **Timesplitters 3** (released as **Future Perfect**). "Surely this cannot help but be the bollocks!" we chirped, naively. We also had word on misguided Sims spin-off **The Urbz**, adventure sequel **Prince Of Persia: Warrior Within** and "online digital crack" **Battlefield: Modern Combat**.

Previews began, oddly, with a picture of current ed-in-chief Tim hugging Charlotte from Ash. She looked really pretty. Then we moved on to **Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow** ("Hide 'n' seek with phosphorus grenades"), **Spider-Man 2** ("Amazing sequel, or like having web fluid shot into your eyes?"), **Silent Hill 4: The Room** ("James Sunderland's going to look like a saint after this") and the gallingly awful **Fight Club** ("Our great depression is our lives").

Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain kicked off reviews, the shooter sequel described as "classy and accessible" and earning 8/10. Meanwhile, **Gran Turismo 4: Prologue Signature Edition** ("The single from the fourth album") got an impatient 7/10, **Red Dead Revolver** ("This year's sleeper hit") bullseyed 9/10 and **Maxxed Out Racing** failed hardest with 2/10. "Leave it alone. Play something else."

FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play when the boss isn't looking



Bloody Fun Day

Perfect for anyone who's having a bad day. Make yourself feel all-powerful by harvesting the souls of the cute, cuddly and generally adorable as the Grim Reaper in this a mix of puzzle and strategy.

snipurl.com/eeesv



Schizophreny

All the fun of hallucinations with none of the awkward sectioning. Help detective John K Facey find the bunny-faced baby while keeping a firm eye on his fragile sanity. Be gentle, he's got a lot on his mind...

snipurl.com/eeesv

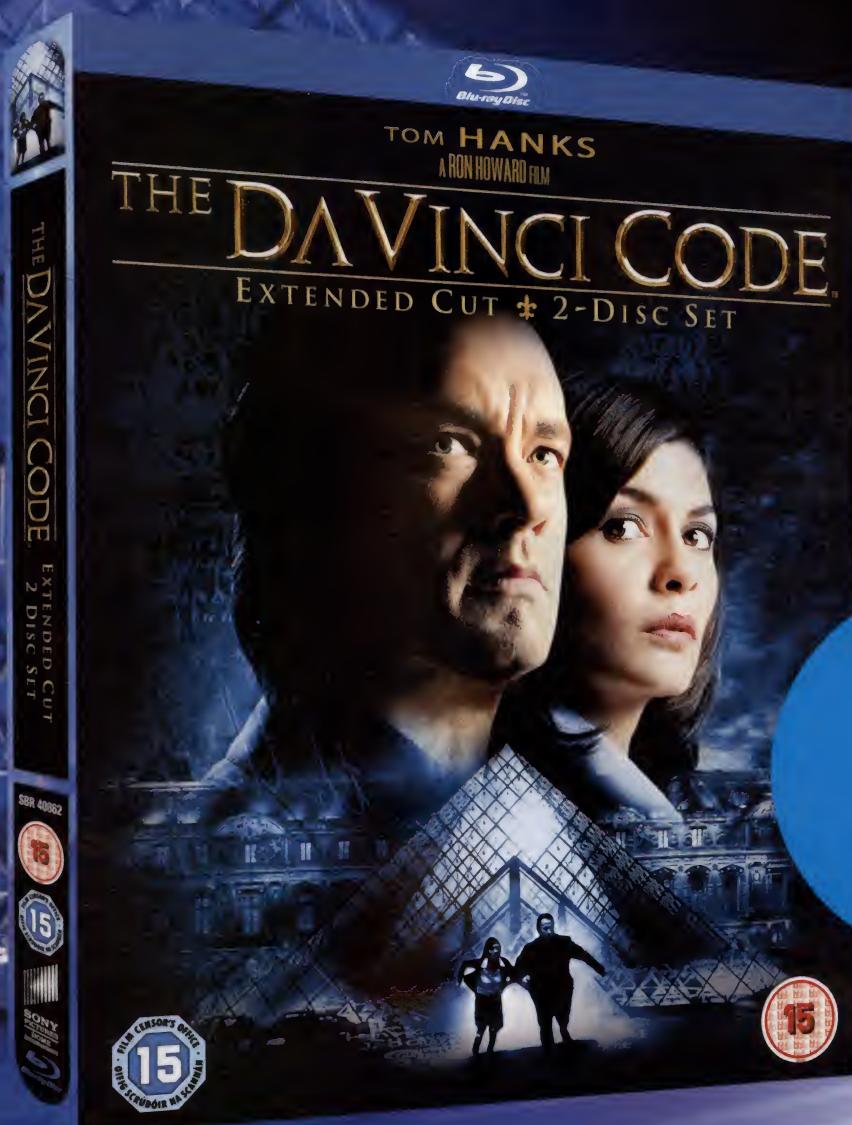


The Dream Machine

Pretty point and click adventure. Our dreams about being trapped on desert islands feature fewer puzzles and more morally damaged mermaids. Usually.

snipurl.com/eeerr

2 GREAT MOVIES



The Da Vinci Code on Blu-ray also includes an exclusive 5 minute scene from the new movie Angels & Demons

Experience the magic of Blu-ray

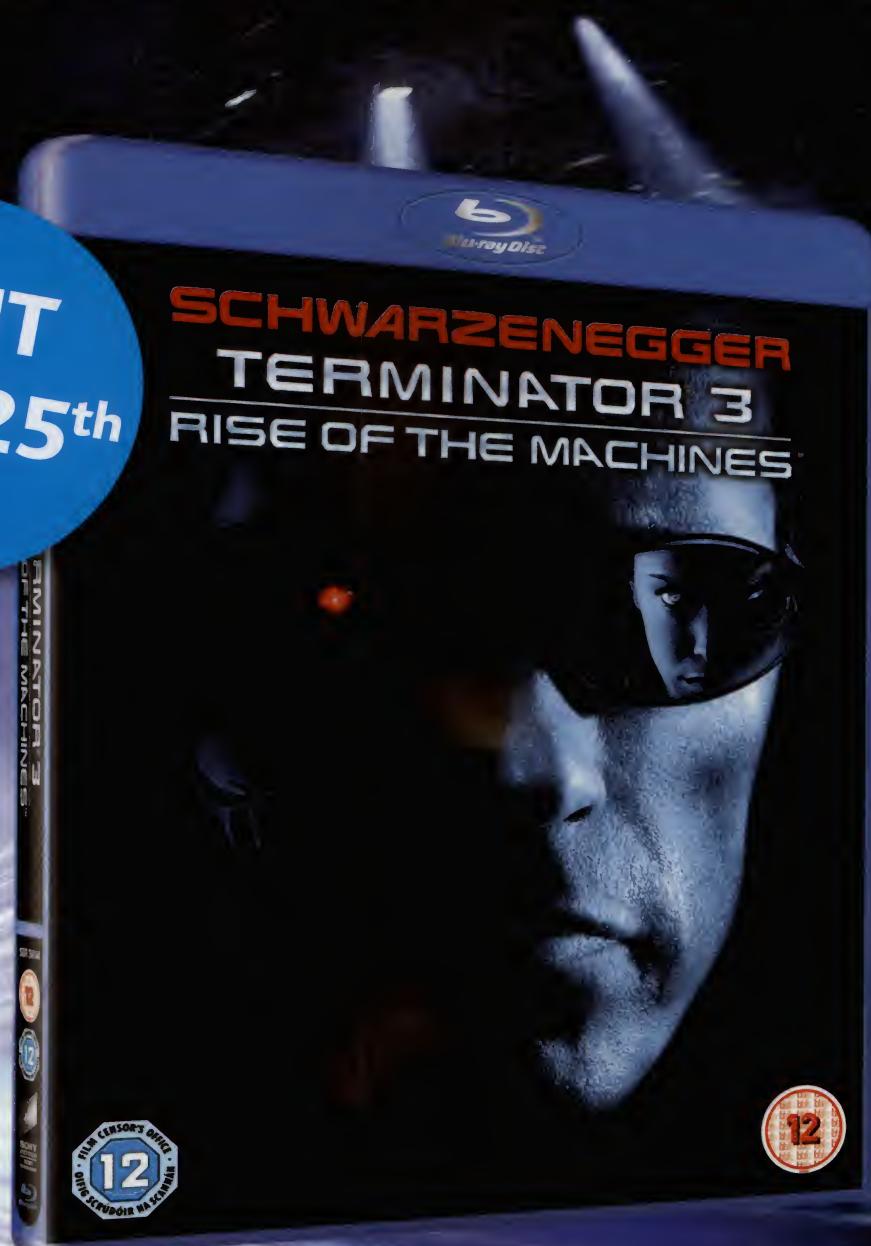
Simply connect a Blu-ray player to an HDTV with an HDMI cable. Don't forget if you've got a PlayStation® 3, it's more than just the ultimate games console, it's a Blu-ray player as well!



* 1080 lines of horizontal resolution versus 480 with conventional DVD, equals between 5 to 6 x as many screen pixels.
©2009 Layout and Design Sony Pictures Home Entertainment Inc. Blu-ray Disc is a registered trademark of Blu-ray Disc Association.
"PS", "PLAYSTATION", "PS3", "PlayStation" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

...NEW TO BLU-RAY

OUT
MAY 25th



UNBELIEVABLE
IMAGE QUALITY

FANTASTIC
SOUND

EXCLUSIVE
FEATURES

With incredible picture clarity, offering over 5 times greater definition than DVD*, Blu-ray offers the best home cinema experience ever. It's what your HDTV was made for.

Compatible with **PLAYSTATION 3**

Available at

hmv
hmv.com

Subscribe

And we'll send you three Blu-ray movies and a QED HDMI cable!

Get Rambo, Men In Black and Vantage Point on Blu-ray + an HDMI lead that will make your PS3 games look incredible*



How to subscribe

Rambo © 2007 Equity Pictures Medienfonds GmbH & Co. KG IV. All Rights Reserved. Men in Black © 1997 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Vantage Point © 2008 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. and GH Three LLC. All Rights Reserved.

PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

Why subscribe?

- You'll save 15% off the cover price and pay only £16.54 every three months...
- ...plus you'll get over £100 worth of Blu-ray and HDMI lead loveliness!*
- Every issue and Blu-ray disc is delivered free of charge, straight to your door!

Offer for UK Direct Debit subscribers only. You will receive 13 issues per year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. *The gifts are subject to availability. The lead requires an HDMI compatible TV. In the unlikely event of stocks becoming exhausted, we reserve the right to substitute with items of similar value. If at any time during the first 60 days you are dissatisfied in any way, please notify us in writing and we will refund you for all un-mailed issues. Closing date: 9 June 2009. Order Ref: P032.

1

2

ONLINE

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/pom/p032

TELEPHONE

0844 848 2852 quoting reference P032

Overseas - www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/P0M

54

PROTOTYPE

When an angry man with huge claws asks to borrow your helicopter, you say yes.

PlayStation[®] Official Magazine - UK

Previews

039

Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

It's all about the bigness this issue: big names and big games. Like Massive Action Game, or MAG to its friends. SOCOM's spiritual successor is stupidly big, with support for 256-player matches. God knows how it works, but it does, and you can get our first hands-on with it over the page – if you like online shooters then you should be getting pretty excited right about now. We've also got an update on Prototype in advance of next month's review, and it's looking an awful lot like inFamous only pitched more at the grumpy emo end of the superhero market. We're also super-psychéd for Dead Rising 2, the comedy/horror hybrid which is totally new to PS3. Prepare to see hundreds of zombies onscreen at once, hungry for brains and ready to be battered with whatever you can grab – baseball bats, bass guitars, roulette wheels. Decisions, decisi... WHACK! So clear some space in your diary, stock up on snacks and get comfy, it's going to take some time to get through this lot.



40

MAG

256 players plus automatic weapons equals total carnage. Discover how Sony's ambitious new online shooter is planning to blow away the competition in our massive playtest.



44

BORDERLANDS

Check out this intergalactic Western's new look, which is "definitely not cel-shaded, honest guy". [Stares long and hard at the shots.] Nope, absolutely not cel-shaded...



46

DEAD RISING 2

What's better than zombies? Zombies in Vegas! Beat the recession blues by stoving in zombie skulls using a cash register. Ooooh, symbolic.



Preview

Dark Hor... Format PS3 ETA November Pub Sony Dev Zipper Interactive

MAG

© Or © Massive © Action © Game





Quick pitch

Biggest shooter yet

256 players gives you the chance to join an army that's the size of, well, a small army.

Enormous arsenal

Guns, grenades, knives, vehicles, air strikes and everything you'd expect on a massive battlefield.

What a lovely war

Rock solid framerate and crystal sharp visuals mean MAG rivals any other shooter.

Imagine a game where you parachuted into the middle of a pitched battle between two armies with over a hundred soldiers on each side. Troops floating down to join the fray as it plays out across a hugely detailed, vast environment; plumes of smoke billowing up into the air; helicopters hovering overhead to deliver new recruits; jet fighters streaking past to strafe the ground with gunfire. At the same time snipers pick off your teammates from distant vantage points while demolitions experts blow the doors off enemy bunkers. Okay, stop imagining. Because having already reinvented

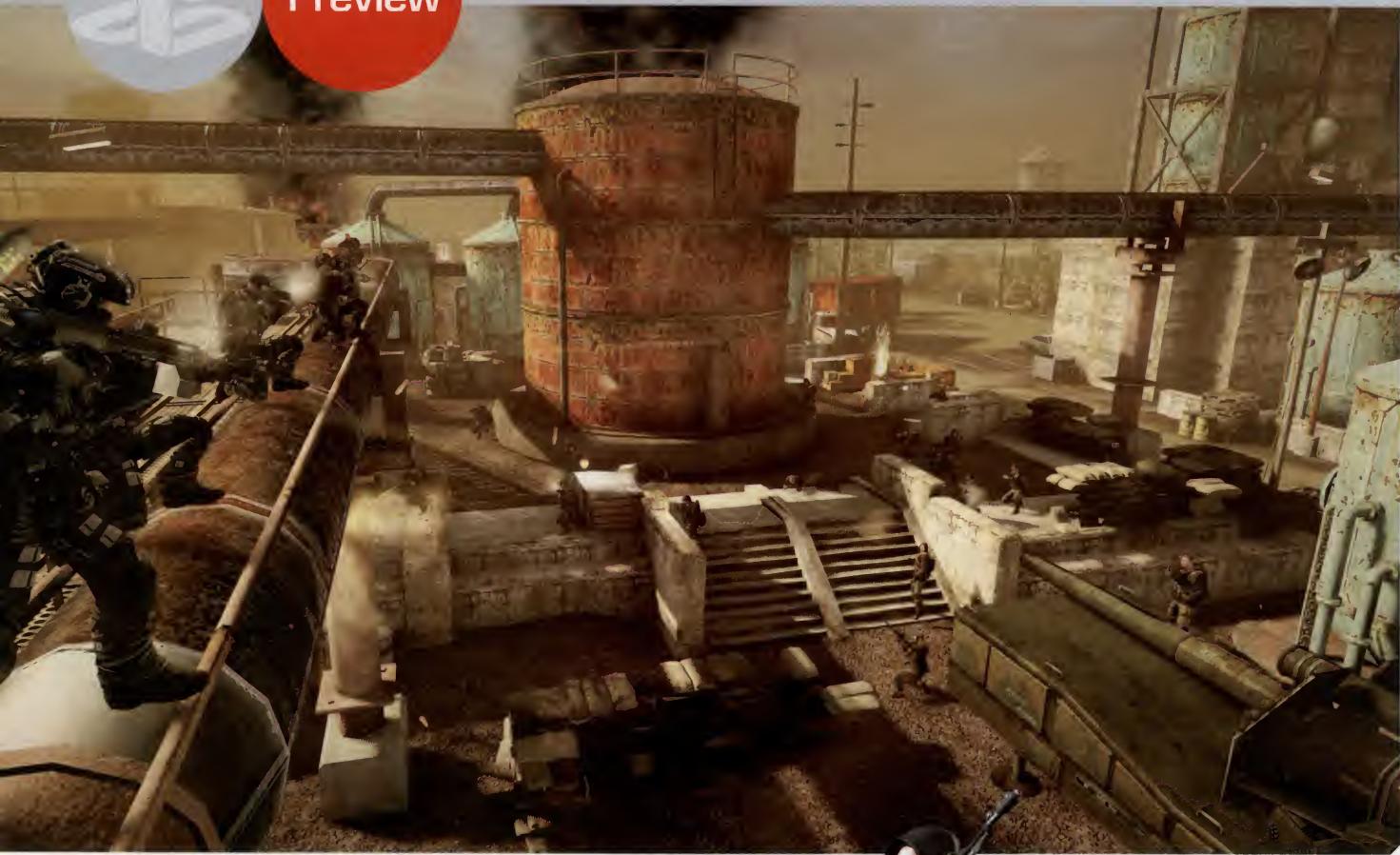
online gaming when they created SOCOM for PS2, the online military specialists at Zipper Interactive are about to do the same again with MAG (Massive Action Game), a massively multiplayer shooter that enables up to 256 players per match to participate in epic near-future warfare. (Everyone in videogame development seems to agree that the near-future is going to be a bit of a bummer.)

The more the shootier

With so many players online at once it's a game that offers unprecedented scale, but not at the expense of cutting-edge visuals. The first thing



► You can play however you want – everything from going very loud to sniping from a distance.



"The technical effects would put a lot of single-player games to shame."

you notice when you enter the battle as part of an eight-man squad, is that MAG looks amazing. Lush tropical jungle, Alaskan wilderness, concrete military bases – they're all depicted with crisp fidelity and a multitude of fancy technical effects that would put a lot of single-player shooters to shame.

Each of the game's three factions has its own distinct visual style which reflects their underlying philosophy, which also extends across all aspects of the game, from the menus between fights to the men in battle – so Raven operatives are sleek and dressed in black, with hi-tech weaponry, while Sver (pronounced 'severe') soldiers look a bit like G20 protestors dressed

in Jerry-rigged body armour. The men of Valor, meanwhile, are bearded military vets with strong jaws and cold eyes. (Beards FTW, obviously.)

The next thing you notice is that the action in MAG is extremely polished. Fights are intense, with smooth, intuitive controls, minimal lag and brutally realistic weaponry and gear – as you might expect, in fact, from a developer that used to specialise in networked military training simulators. You can pick your character's loadouts from a vast array of options, saving three kit-sets that you can switch to whenever you die. Handily for such fast-paced action it's easy to tell at a glance from the



■ Team leaders have to coordinate the chaos: "Godfather actual, this is Hitman two, how copy?"

character models what sort of guns and equipment your teammates (and your enemies) are carrying.

Follow the leader

One of the most impressive things, though, is the way that MAG imposes order on the chaos of battle, by organising armies into hierarchies. If you want, you can just go around shooting people and things, and that's a lot of fun by itself. But you can also choose to follow your army's objectives which are clearly set out for you on-screen via a system of waypoints and icons. The really interesting thing is that squad leaders are also able to give their soldiers a series of sub-goals (or FRAGO assignments to give them their correct real-world military

5 good reasons Why big is beautiful

1 256 Players

That's a lot of virtual warmongers. Two bristling armies' worth, in fact, fighting across environments that are as big as a kilometre squared.

2 Follow my lead

It's always easy to see what you're supposed to do, and following orders is the key to victory. Do well and next time you might get to give them.

3 Persistence

Your character in MAG is for life, not just Christmas, so fighting earns XP that you can spend between battles on new equipment.

4 Technology

Zipper Interactive has set up dedicated servers with fancy new architecture in order to minimise lag and prevent cheating in MAG.

5 Three tribes...

Sure, the Ravens have got the tech and Sver have got the attitude. But the men of Valor have beards and big biceps. They're from Alaska.

Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Rob Bowling
Community manager, Infinity Ward

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

"The team at Naughty Dog are fantastic at delivering that classic adventure game feeling and excitement with a great balance of gameplay, witty dialogue, and fantastic characters with personalities that you actually care about."



Hideo Kojima's Next Game

"I don't know what it is, I don't care what universe it's based on, and I don't have any clue what the gameplay is like. Whatever Hideo Kojima is working on, I want it. Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots was the cause of great neglect to my family, friends, and personal hygiene. That makes Kojima's next game a must have for me."



God Of War III



► Factions and loadouts are instantly recognisable, even in all the chaos.

term), laying down waypoints and pointing out strategic objectives such as enemy gun emplacements or anti-aircraft guns. And, since completing your squad's objectives gives you more experience, it acts as a strong incentive to inspire teamwork.

But how do you get to become an officer? By volunteering, of course, and by earning plenty of experience – and as you gain XP, you can progress up the ranks, from leading a squad of eight players to taking charge of a platoon of four squads, or even becoming the Officer In Charge and controlling the whole army. And being an officer is not just about giving the orders. They also get a series of

leadership abilities, that provide bonuses to the men under their charge plus tactical support abilities such as ordering a mortar barrage, or calling in an aerial strike. It's easy both to give and receive orders, and this adds a strategic dimension and sharp sense of focus to the chaos on the battlefield. And it is chaos, but in a good way: fast and furious as the fortunes of war constantly shift with each new strategic point that is captured or lost. Yes, MAG supports 256 players, but its scale is much more than just a pure technical achievement, and there's always the sense that these battlefields – even while strewn with the fallen – really are alive.

Dev talk



"Scale alone is not necessarily something that people will buy a game for. What I'm most proud of in MAG is that the scale of the game is for gameplay rather than just a back of the box feature."
Ed Byrne
Creative director, Zipper Interactive

"I won't even mention the fact that this is the first time the badass of Kratos will be experienced in full HD, or the fact that I was blown away by how epic God Of War was on the PS2 so imagine how much more they'll be able to expand on that vision on Blu-ray. Just give me GOD OF WAR III!"



Preview

Quick pitch

Danger zone

The planet of Pandora is overrun by all manner of vicious creatures and murderous bandits.

Think Fallout 4

A post-apocalyptic setting, RPG levelling-up, and FPS action make this feel like Bethesda's opus.

Friendly fire

Tackle missions in co-op or challenge teammates to deathmatches to settle scores.



The Next... **Fallout 3** Format PS3 ETA June Pub Take Two Dev Gearbox

Borderlands

△ Same ○ Game ✗ New □ Look

Let's just get past the fact the monster's face looks like a lady's mimsy and move briskly on to the cel-shaded redesign. It's the best move Borderlands could've made. Originally revealed two years ago in glorious shades of grimy future brown, it was hard to get excited about *another* dust-bowl planet populated by no-name hobos. Now, with its expensive-looking cartoon/anime makeover, it's looking a lot more interesting. Shallow? Us?

Inside Pandora's box

The action takes place on a planet called Pandora – a wasteland that attracted settlers looking for their fortune, despite

the remoteness making it a one-way trip. It turns out, aside from some alien technology, nothing's been discovered there except dirt. And a few years after people started arriving, all manner of nasty wildlife started emerging from hibernation. So: you're trapped on a bleak planet with bitey things following an "if it's smaller than me" dietary code. Probably not what they sold in the brochure.

The good news is that you're not alone. With the choice of four-player, drop in/out co-op, missions are a mix of central story quests, where main character Rolland searches for the planet's mysterious secret, and RPG-style objectives – kill ten animals or find 20 items, say. While it

plays like a shooter, it's influenced by RPGs. Your character levels-up, and some enemies are impossible to defeat until you're tough enough. Monsters like Skags (pest-like scavengers) are easy prey, while the behemoth above, known as a Rak Hive, is more stern. It's a living home for Raks, the leathery things flying around it. There'll be no shortage of weapons, though. According to Gearbox the game can create over half a million guns by randomly mixing parts – laser sighted incendiary revolvers, chain-fed machine shotguns – almost anything you can think of. So you should be able to find something perfectly suited to taking down a 300ft mimsy-faced monster.





It's not just a big angry monster, it's a big angry monster with other angry monsters living in its back. It's a twofer.

Could Be A Contender

Fallout: New Vegas



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

The premise

Everybody's favourite nuclear-themed RPG Fallout 3 packs up its Pip-Boy and moves to Sin City.

The reality

Bethesda has handed over control to Alpha Protocol developer Obsidian.

The hook

We expect shooting ghouls in old ruined casinos, mutated showgirls, and walking down Sunset Strip with Dogmeat.

The inspiration

It won't be a sequel, but the game will take place in the same universe as Fallout 3.

The chances

Strong. Obsidian has a good pedigree with Star Wars KOTR II, and Bethesda will still be keeping an eye on the development process.



Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub Bethesda Dev Obsidian.

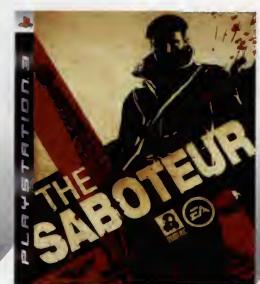
On The Box Judged by their covers



Sacred 2: Fallen Angel

The publisher thinks this says 'epic fantasy conflict'. Which we know actually means hammer like buggery to kill a million dudes.

Format PS3 ETA 15 May Pub Koch



The Saboteur

The big tower and kitsch wallpaper background imply it's taking place in a Blackpool B&W, while the shadowy man, game title and splatter suggest he might be redecorating it *badly on purpose*.

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub EA



Batman: Arkham Asylum

Someone busted their balls to make amazing weather effects so it will rain constantly. Batman also uses special 'grumpy baby' rendering tech.

Format PS3 ETA 29 May Pub Eidos



Preview



The Next Big Thing Format PS3 ETA March 2010 Pub Capcom Dev Blue Castle

Dead Rising 2

Ⓐ Zombie ⓒ Zombie ⓓ Zombie ⓔ Moose?

Star Power

The new hero



New hero Chuck Greene is replacing the gruff photojournalist Frank West from the first game. To be the hero in Dead Rising you've got to fit a very specific profile: resilient, gobby, looks good in a dress. Not being a professional snapper like Frank, there's no mention of whether Chuck's outing will include the photography mini-game from the original, but he is a father. So expect missions to revolve around his daughter.

Five hundred zombies at once. Most people would consider that 'zombie enough' for anyone. That's what you got in the first Dead Rising on Xbox 360. Compare that to Resident Evil 5 which has 20-30 on screen at any one time. That may be enough to freak you out in tight corridors but how many zombies would you need to feel scared in, say, Vegas-style cavernous, air-con chilled, neon-drenched casinos? Dead Rising 2 thinks that number is 7,000.

Super size me

We're well aware that 14 times the zombies doesn't guarantee 14 times the fun. But watching Dan Brady, the CEO of Canadian developer Blue Castle riding a chainsaw-equipped bike

through a crowd, we have to admit, it does *look* like 14 times the fun. A cursory sweep of the strip sees a kill count of 500. At the moment this is still early days and there's a noticeable dip in the frame rate, but it's still solid stuff. Blue Castle have built a completely new engine to deal with the numbers and it looks more than up to the job.

Moving development from Capcom's internal Japanese studio to a Western developer surprised some, but it's an extension of creator Keiji Inafune's desire to make a true 'Western-style' game. What better way to do that than by using actual Western developers? If we're honest, the fact that Blue Castle's track record consists of three baseball games – one of which resident American sports expert, dep ed Ben,

describes as "awful" – is a bit worrying.

Overall, the basic template remains unchanged with a three-day span that sees you having to survive until rescue arrives. Some elements are being tweaked: the original had a one-save limit, which – combined with a strict time limit – meant it was all too easy to save at a point in the action where it was impossible to finish the game. Blue Castle says it's fixing that, but won't explain how yet.

New stuff includes "procedural dismemberment". So swing a chainsaw at someone's neck and you'll decapitate them. Or start hefting a sword and the zombies come apart like palming tofu through a tennis racquet. The weapon system has been revamped too. Chainsaws and blunt instruments are

Quick pitch

They're everywhere!

Expect more brain-hungry zombies than you can shake a stick/axe/roulette wheel at.

Will it blend?

Use almost anything as a weapon and reduce the shuffling corpses to a fine paste.

Be punctual

Juggle missions and make it to the evac point on time to get out alive.



As well as crushing corpses you can strap chainsaws and other weapons to vehicles to maximise your cleaving potential.



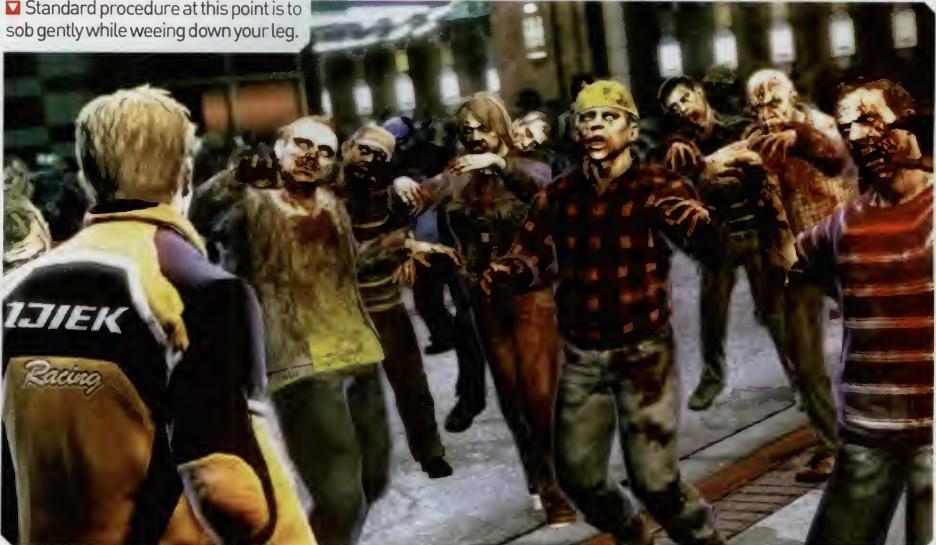
Chuck prepares to treat the zombies of Vegas to some slap bass.



047

still in, but now there's more choice than ever. There's also a new weapon/clothing system. Previously wardrobe changes were for looks only, now they'll have offensive potential. Charging through the undead wearing a moose head and tearing them apart with the antlers, for example. There's also a combination system that'll enable you to form weapons which you otherwise wouldn't find lying around, such as two chainsaws attached to an oar. After killing a zombie by pushing a bucket full of drills on to its head, Inafune says, "How often do you just find a bucket with drills in it, lying around?" Well, it just depends on how prepared you are for the zombie apocalypse (slides bucket out of view).

Standard procedure at this point is to sob gently while wee ing down your leg.



5 good reasons Why Dead Rising 2 will be the greatest zombie game ever

1 Old zombies

Modern Resi's undead 2.0 are fine if you like chatty post-modern sprinters. But this is all about classic Romero shufflers.

2 Crowd control

This isn't just about zombies, it's about thousands of them. If you don't carve up several hundred in one go then you're doing it wrong.

3 Weird weapons

If it can pop a zombie skull then it's a weapon. This means moose heads, roulette wheels and what looks like a nail-covered gas canister.

4 Supporting cast

In the face of zombie apocalypse people react differently – some need rescuing while others turn into psychotic bosses.

5 Well timed

If you aren't at the pick up point at the end of three days, you get left behind. You'll have to play through more than once to see everything.



Preview



Shooting stuff: extra satisfying thanks to a tile-by-tile, bullet-by-bullet destruction system. Pop!



Can't
wait?
Play
these



Grand Theft Auto IV
(PS3, Rockstar)
The last word in open-world crime, videogame storytelling, high production values, and most other things.



The
Godfather II
(PS3, EA)
More tactical – and fun – than the first game, this steers wide of the film but delivers on the don-like strategising.

Mafia II

△ Hats ◯ Guns ✘ Cars ◻ Capos

They're making Mafia II in a bleak concrete industrial estate two hours from Prague, along a motorway which Stalin apparently forgot to finish. It's in sharp contrast to the post-war metropolis of Empire Bay, the lush, luminous New York stand-in where the game itself is set. The contrast begs a question: is it strange to be making a game about such a particularly American mythos, from Eastern Europe? The reply we get from Mafia II's AI programmer Martin Brandstätter makes us move on, quickly. "Organised crime not special to America," he says, with a flat, cold look.

So let's take as a starting point the slightly scary fact that the team at 2K Czech knows its material really, really well. And then let's move on to what

the game itself is: an open-world crime sequel set, according to associate producer Alex Cox, "in the same universe" as the original Mafia, but with an all-new city, storyline and set of characters.

Steal from everybody

Details of the story itself are still very general, but it starts with a central character, Vito Scaletta, returning home from World War 2 (echoing Michael Corleone at the very start of The Godfather) and hooking up with old pal Joey Barbaro. They take a few jobs in the neighbourhood, starting small – pinching cars for spare parts – but quickly getting more serious, until the pair are made men dealing with the city's major crime families. The angle is authentic period gangster

Quick pitch

Back home

Hero Vito Scaletta has returned from World War 2 to a life of small-time crime in Empire Bay.

Big story

Take Two is making big claims for its decade-spanning 'rise through the ranks' narrative.

Grand theft?

Like the first game, Mafia II is built around GTA-flavoured car driving and third-person shooting.

epic – tough-talking wiseguys seen through the photography of Scorsese and Coppola. Not being tied to a specific licence – unlike EA's The Godfather games – gives Mafia II the freedom to draw on influences from all over in order to create its own thing ("This thing of ours," as Tony Soprano would say). There's a tougher, noir feel to the sequel to go along with the classic mobster hooks. We see Hitchcock's wanted man thriller North By Northwest among a stack of DVDs in the 2K Czech office, and hear a muzack version of Nino Rota's instantly recognisable Godfather score when the game's main characters pause for a moment in an elevator during a mission we're shown.

That mission is a hit on a rival family Don at a grand hotel, and it



There are around 50 models of car in the game, with realistically heavy handling tweaked to stop the driving being super boring.



Vito is voiced by Rick Pasqualone, who oddly also played Aldo in *The Godfather II*.



Vito and Joe nab blue overalls for an undercover assassination job. In which they shoot everything to bits.



Car radios play period music. Think Galaxy News Radio in *Fallout 3*.

showcases what Cox points to as the game's big selling point. "Where we feel the Mafia II experience excels particularly," he explains, "is in the narrative experience – in the way the city works as a backdrop to the narrative. Empire Bay is this great sandbox, a sophisticated environment, but it's very much the backdrop to this huge story which crashes through [its] centre." When Vito, Joe and a mouthy young friend of theirs begin their journey to the hotel, the city reveals itself to be a vibrant, thronging environment full of grandstanding art-deco architecture, looming advertising boards and lively period touches (Johnny Cash's *Get Rhythm* fires up on the radio as the boys climb into a smooth-bodied Sedan).

What we see of the gameplay itself compares predictably with Mafia's open-world rivals. It's dominated by third-person shooting which appears pretty standard, apart from an unusually sophisticated destruction system which sees materials splinter and crack with understated realism (at one point the developer targets a

"You won't be able to walk around in pink tights and a pirate hat."

leather-bound bar stool, and it erupts exactly as expected). But what really stands out is the emphasis on the narrative – the action's punctuated by frequent mini-cut-scenes, and the two characters banter with each other constantly in gruff, authentic tones.

Going straight

Having spent so much effort on making the story the centrepiece, the team feels protective of it. "We don't want to encourage the player to cause mass mayhem across the city," Cox explains. "Of course, you can – it's a sandbox. You can drive crazily and do all the things you see in other open-world crime games, but the design ethic is to make you feel like a mafia guy." That's why the police are more vigilant than veterans of GTA or Saints Row might expect – more forgiving, Cox tells us, than in the first Mafia (where players would regularly be hauled into the station for *running a*

red light) but still stern enough to discourage free-wheeling rampages.

The same goes for freedom of customisation. The game's cars can be repainted, souped up and otherwise modified, but only with period paints and parts (growling superchargers yes, decals and spoilers no). Similarly, you can change Vito's clothes (he gets a swankier wardrobe as he advances through the ranks anyway) but only within the bounds of narrative credibility. "I don't think it's any spoiler for us to reveal that you won't be able to walk around town in pink tights and a pirate hat," says Cox.

It's a disciplined approach, that won't win fans among Saints Row's more distractible followers and almost certainly means Mafia II won't be challenging GTA IV in terms of freedom of play. But it does mean we can expect a focused, atmospheric and ridiculously good-looking mob saga, and that's almost as good.

Dev talk



"Has PS3 dev work been hard? I expected this question. It's... challenging. It offers some advantages and disadvantages. Blu-ray's size makes a big difference with streaming information." **Michal Janáček**, Technical director, 2K Czech

"ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING TITLES OF 2009"
GAMESMASTER

BATMAN™ ARKHAM ASYLUM

COMING SOON

www.batmanarkhamasylum.com



PLAYSTATION.3



Games for Windows LIVE



XBOX 360



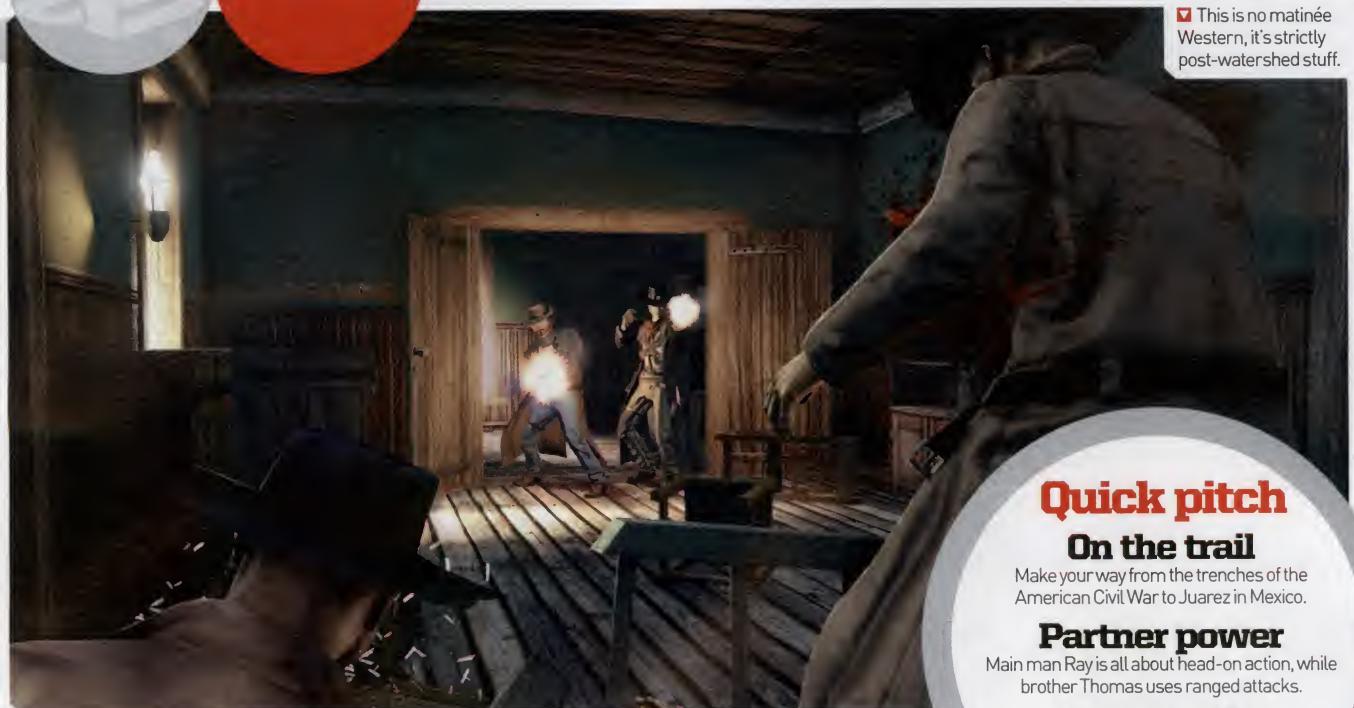
rocksteady™



BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM Software (c) 2009 Eidos Interactive Ltd. Developed by Rocksteady Studios Ltd. Published by Eidos Interactive Ltd. Rocksteady and the Rocksteady logo are trademarks of Rocksteady Studios Ltd. Eidos and the Eidos logo are trademarks of Eidos Interactive Ltd. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved. BATMAN and all characters, their distinctive likenesses, and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics (c) 2009. All Rights Reserved.



BATMAN and all characters, their likenesses, and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. © 2009. All Rights Reserved.
WBIE LOGO, WB SHIELD:™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(S09)



Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA June Pub Ubisoft Dev Techland

Call Of Juarez Bound In Blood

△ The ◎ Other ✕ Cowboy □ Game

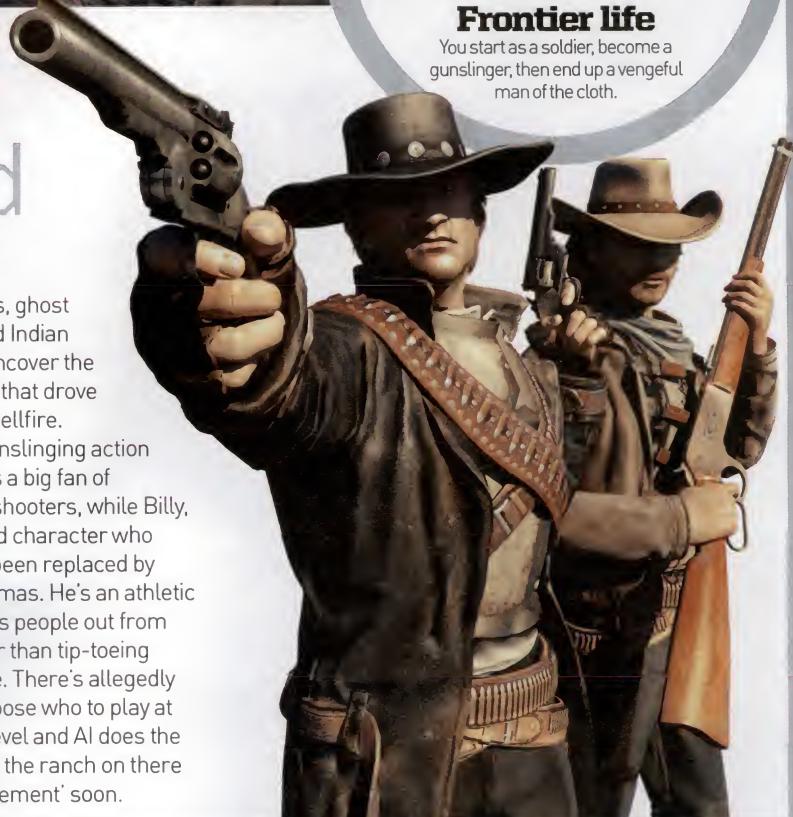
The original Call Of Juarez was a hit-and-miss blend of first-person shootouts and stealth that never made it to PS3. It did, however, feature one of the coolest characters around: Reverend Ray, an ex-gunner turned apocalyptic preacher who wielded a Bible in his left hand while shooting the good, the bad, and the ugly with the right.

Born again

This sequel tells the story of Ray before he found God. It's a bit of a gamble – Ubisoft is taking away the one thing that made him such a unique character. Instead you'll be travelling through iconic Wild West

locations – saloons, ghost towns, deserts and Indian settlements – to uncover the events in Ray's life that drove him to preaching hellfire.

However, the gunslinging action is still intact. Ray is a big fan of dynamite and six-shooters, while Billy, the unloved second character who used stealth, has been replaced by Ray's brother, Thomas. He's an athletic rifleman who takes people out from the rooftops rather than tip-toeing around a campsite. There's allegedly no co-op – you choose who to play at the start of each level and AI does the rest – but we'd bet the ranch on there being an 'announcement' soon.



The hook

Dynamite, guns and frontier law...

One thing that made the first game stand out was Ray's gruff delivery, the classic uncompromising script and mature subject matter. Bound in Blood follows a similar vein, so you can forget about John Wayne-style melodrama because this is a bloody, violent game of cowboys and Indians for grown-ups.



The action starts off in Civil war-torn Georgia.



You'll visit classic Western frontier towns.



Despite a two-man team there's no co-op. Yet.

▀ This is no matinée Western, it's strictly post-watershed stuff.

Quick pitch

On the trail

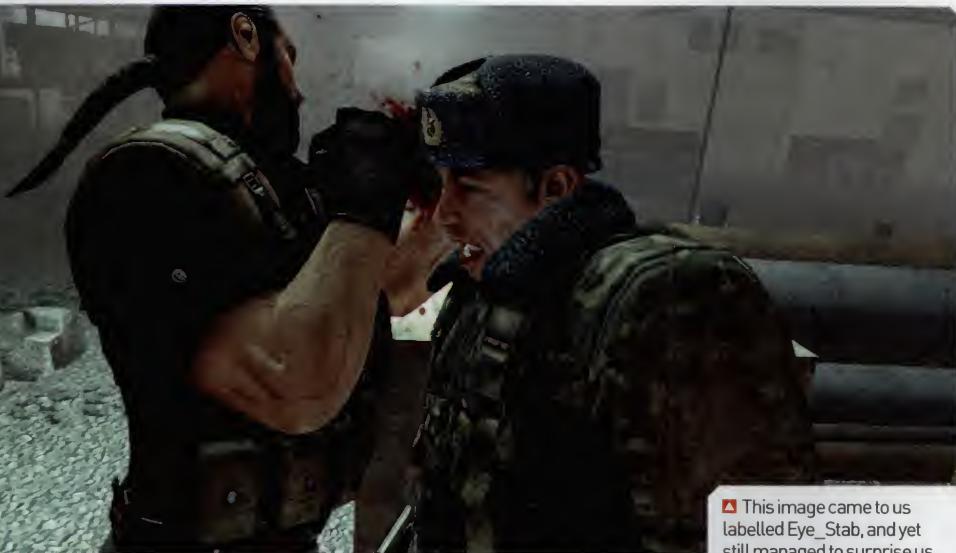
Make your way from the trenches of the American Civil War to Juarez in Mexico.

Partner power

Main man Ray is all about head-on action, while brother Thomas uses ranged attacks.

Frontier life

You start as a soldier, become a gunslinger, then end up a vengeful man of the cloth.



Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub Bethesda Softworks Dev Rebellion

Rogue Warrior

Ⓐ Knives ⓒ Swearing ⓓ Guns ⓔ Ponytail

It looked like any other warehouse in any other first-person shooter, then we saw mercenary Dick Marcinko in action. First he tricked a guard by shooting out a light, then, when the poor sap came to investigate, he got a knife in the kidney. "April Fool, motherf*****!"

This was a brutal kill – one of 25, and what developer Rebellion sees as the main selling point of the game based on Marcinko's life. Get close enough to the enemy without being seen and you can take them out with a single tap of a button. Some will use the environment, a lot will use a knife. We saw eye-stabbing, face-punching, throwing, throat-slitting and even heard talk of [shiver] testicle-shivving. The kills will also be available in multiplayer, which will offer deathmatch, team deathmatch



From Russia with love

The game is set in the 1980s during the Cold War, and is loosely based on Marcinko's exploits as a mercenary and Navy SEAL. He's called in to deal with Russians and Koreans who are trafficking missiles, but ends up going rogue when The Man tries to pull him off the job. The Wrestler/Sin City's Mickey Rourke provides Dick's voice, and swears it up like a trucker with Tourette's. Marcinko has consulted on every single part of the game to make sure it was true to life, including the brutal kill moves. So if you think we're saying anything negative about this game ever, you're crazier than he is.



With that technique Dick's just one kill away from a slipped disc.

▲ This image came to us labelled Eye_Stab, and yet still managed to surprise us.

Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

▲ Bat's life

Whisper it, but Batman: Arkham Asylum looks set to buck the trend of licensed superhero games being balls. Review next month.

▲ Côte d'Ivoire

Lunchtime PES spiced up by recreating classic Africa Cup Of Nations games. 'The Elephants' of Ivory Coast best suit our buccaneering all-attack style.



▲ Hard hitter

Don't be put off by all the cuddling on the floor – there are few better things on PS3 than a big UFC knockout.



▼ Buzz cut

Brain Of The UK triggers a brief renaissance before Buzz! is once again ruined by our super-competitive staffers.

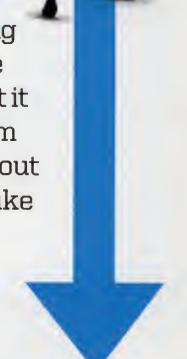


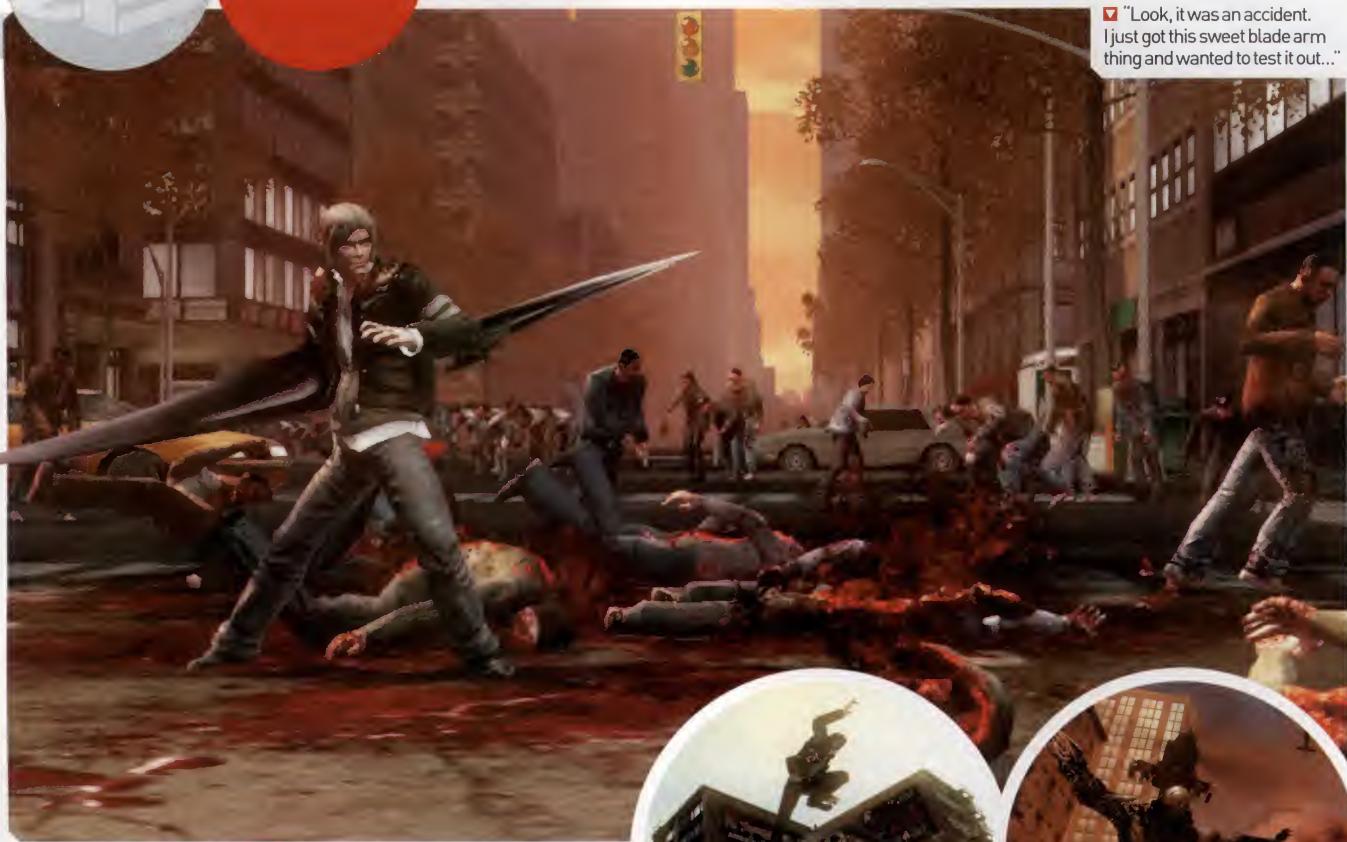
▼ X-Man mess up

No amount of healing power can mend the Wolverine game, but it is strange seeing him get shot to bits without his guts falling out like a red skipping rope.

▼ Uphill struggle

Loving Assassin's Creed II's Italian setting, and new star Ezio Auditore has some cool moves, but when it comes to free-running it will be hard to outdo inFamous.





The Mind Big Thing Format PS3 ETA 5 June Pub Activision Dev Radical Entertainment

054 Prototype

△ David ○ Cronenberg ✕ Does □ GTA

You know this month's cover game? Well this is like that, only fed through a wood chipper by a madman. There's gore everywhere. I'm standing in a pile of bloody chunks, idly trying to decide between enormous razor claws, giant sword arm or tentacle blender. There's also a touch of Kratos to Alex Mercer's mission of vengeance. He's not *really* evil. It's just that if he has to liquidise lots of people to get his revenge, he will. Producer Max Belanger clarifies: "He's neither good nor bad. He does bad things and bad things were done to him. There's no morality code."

Which basically means it's a big, bloody free-for-all. Alex can morph his arms into a range of blades, shields

and boulder-like mashing fists. All of which I test on the people, monsters and soldiers who crowd the streets like it's some kind of apocalyptic Mardi Gras. Only with gristle and arterial spurts replacing beads and streamers. It's probably a bit wrong... okay, *definitely*, but it's fantastically entertaining. Imagine being Niko Bellic but instead of cars you have mutant shape-shifting powers. I only got stuck into one mission properly because I kept messing around so much – flying, leaping small buildings, turning my skin into armour plating. It's like being all of the X-Men at once.

A key power is consuming people – absorbing them into your body like a meat-sponge. That gets you a health

boost and the ability to use their skin as a disguise. Certain victims also contain memories, so soaking up a helicopter pilot grants you the ability to fly choppers, while key characters hold clues that'll unlock amnesiac Alex's mysterious past.

Streets of rage

For the few hours I played, this seemed like the kind of game where you ask a lot of questions. Things like, "Can I throw that car at that tank?" *Boom!* Yup. "Can I run up the side of this building, leap hundreds of feet into the air and hijack a helicopter?" *Scream. Vroom!* Okay then. The main question we have right now, though, is: "When can I have another go?"

Dev talk



"The mechanic of consuming people consists of killing them and sucking their mass into your own body. It is gory, it is violent and it's designed for an adult audience."

Max Belanger
Producer, Radical Entertainment.



Urban chaos

Unlocking Alex's past means tearing up New York



With the Big Apple infected by a mysterious virus and the population mutating, Alex must fight monsters and the army, flattening the city as he tries to find out who's behind it all.



Preview



Classic Series Format PS3 ETA September Pub Codemasters Dev Codemasters

Colin McRae Dirt 2

• Befriend • Block • Mirra • Pastrana



Dev talk

"Say 'arcade' or 'sim' and it turns off part of your audience. We're creating handling that feels accessible and realistic."

Gavin Raeburn
Sri exec producer,
Codemasters

Our single criticism of Dirt 1 was that it was tough to get into if you were a casual driver. No such problem with Dirt 2. From the first play of our world exclusive hands-on, the team's determination to make this user-friendly and playable by anyone is obvious at every turn.

It's evident in the menus, where joining events – on or offline – is as simple as flicking left and right to navigate a smart, wallchart-style event map. It's evident inside the RV motorhome that acts as your hub to everything in the game, and offers a

different view through its windows depending on where in the world it's currently parked – far easier on the eye than a conventional start menu. Most crucially, it's evident when you get out onto the track and compete.

Continental drift

There's a very noticeable difference between guiding a Subaru STI through hairpins in Croatian woodland and powering across a man-made track beneath Battersea power station in a West Coast Choppers Trophy Truck – as there should be, because the

Codemasters boys pride themselves on making every car behave just like it does in real life. But what both driving experiences have in common is that you can jump into them and instantly love them, which was rarely the case in the original. The handling's been tweaked so you can feel the nuances of each vehicle without being repeatedly punished for, say, braking a split second late going into a corner. It doesn't mean Dirt has turned into an arcade game; simply that Dirt 2 retains the depth of its predecessor while enabling even the most-haphazard

Quick pitch

Pick your poison

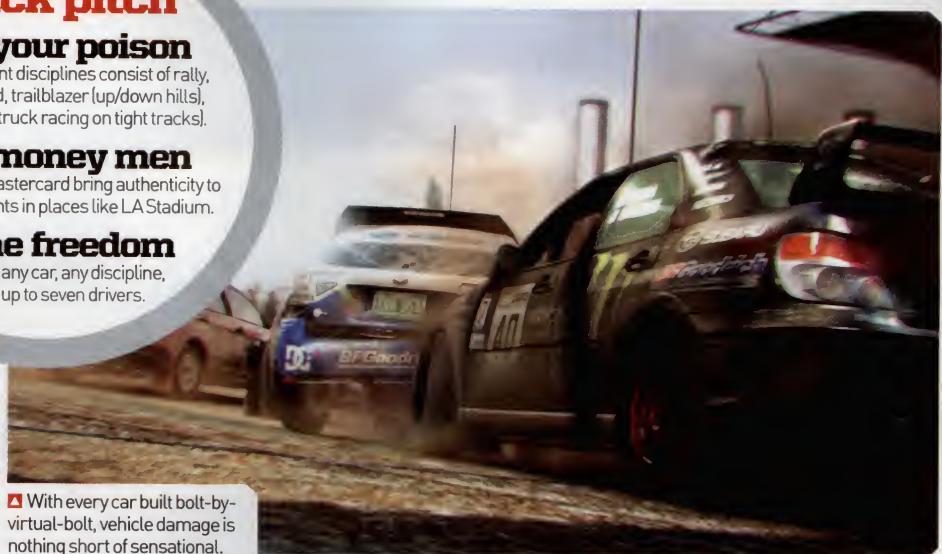
Dirt 2's five event disciplines consist of rally, rallycross, raid, trailblazer (up/down hills), and landrush (truck racing on tight tracks).

Real money men

Sponsors like Mastercard bring authenticity to the fictional events in places like LA Stadium.

Online freedom

Any track, any car, any discipline, against up to seven drivers.



With every car built bolt-by-bolt, vehicle damage is nothing short of sensational.

By the numbers

| | |
|--|------------|
| Racing environments | 18 |
| World Tour events | 100+ |
| Polygons per car | 40,000 |
| Most powerful car | 900bhp |
| Most spectators at an event | 120,000 |
| Good lap time at Ensenada Port | 1m20s |
| Views of Dirt 2 advisor Ken Block's 'Gymkhana' video | 20,000,000 |



Earning packs that improve your vehicle means you can now take one car through the entire game.



One criticism of the original was there wasn't enough, um, dirt. Result: a plentiful supply of sand, mud, and filthy water in Dirt 2.

novice to enjoy it from the outset.

An intriguing addition is being able to befriend drivers as you compete round the globe. Getting matey with the likes of Ken Block, Dave Mirra and Travis Pastrana means they'll invite you to race against them. Win and you'll open up new events on the wallchart; ram them off the road and they'll hurl abuse at you and leave you without any partners for the team events that open up later. It's an unconventional feature that could add a welcome layer of personality to what's already shaping up to be a special drive.

Prequels How McRae kept reinventing rallying



Colin McRae Rally (PS1, 1998)

The game that started it all was first released over a decade ago. Travis Pastrana, who returns in Dirt 2, starred alongside McRae, Richard Burns and more. Courses in eight countries featured, but it was the arcade, simple-to-handle rallying that helped it to notch up big review scores.



Colin McRae Rally 3 (PS2, 2002)

The first McRae game on PS2 pulled the series towards more sim-based racing, and was especially interesting because its season mode took place over the course of three years, as you worked your way towards becoming the champion in McRae's Ford Focus RS WRC.



Colin McRae Dirt (PS2, 2007)

A complete revamp for the series' PS3 debut, with the physics engine built from scratch and a huge graphical upgrade. We scored it 9/10. The game went to number one in the UK charts just days after McRae was tragically killed alongside his son and two family friends in a helicopter crash.

The Latest On...

New shots, new games, new info



Zombie Apocalypse

Format PSN ETA Summer Pub Konami

We're trying to convince ourselves this is Left 4 Dead for PSN. It's a chaotic four-way shooter in which you have to survive at all costs for 55 days. Best weapon: a teddy bear filled with C4. "Thanks honey, I love..." [KABOOM!]



Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Activision

Wolverine and Iron Man have gone to war with each other as the unloved action RPG returns. This time it's about fusing abilities; like the Invisible Woman creating a force field that Iron Man can charge with energy to make a bomb.



Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao

Format PSN ETA Autumn Pub Namco Bandai

Scrolling beat-'em-up that's being used to test PS3's prototype 3D tech. Karate kick your way through a cartoon Japan on a quest to kill an Evil Overlord. Includes *zombie ninjas*. In 3-bloody-D!



Lego Rock Band

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Activision

Rock Band gets even more family-friendly with this plastic block crossover, which uses the existing peripherals and features tons of customisable figures. The tracklist includes Blur's Song 2 and Europe's The Final Countdown.



Saw

Format PS3 ETA October Pub Konami

Sadistic mentalist Jigsaw takes over an asylum and rigs the rooms with what we're told are randomly generated traps. (How random, exactly?) Konami is hoping – we suspect in vain – that it will be this generation's Silent Hill.



Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier

Format PSP ETA Winter Pub Sony

New PSP game from Ratchet & Clank's platforming rivals, picking up where the PS2 trilogy left off. Five different aircraft and a new transforming weapon called the Gunstaff are promised.

There's more...

Star Trek is, incredibly, so hot right now – and it's coming to PS3 in the form of top-down PSN shooter

Star Trek: DAC

, due to beam up later this year.

(And no, none of us know what DAC stands for).

Project Gotham Racing

developer Bizarre

Creations is working on a new PS3 racer called *Blur*, which sounds an awful lot like 'Burnout with guns'.

Therefore we're in. The original *Call Of Duty* – a PC-only release back in 2003, and Infinity Ward's debut – is coming to PSN, and will inevitably still be better than half the shooters released in 2009.

Namco Bandai is finally bringing its revered ball-rolling, stuff-collecting series to PS3 with

Katamari Damacy Tribute

No release date so far, but it'll be in full 1080p HD.

Four games using Flower's PhyreEngine are inbound: *Topato*, *The Seventh Seal*, *Strength Of The Sword*, and an unnamed title from

Australian developer Big Ant Studios. THQ is developing *Saints Row 3* for release sometime next year, while sequels to

Darksiders: Wrath Of War

and *Red Faction Guerrilla* are underway and will hit in 2011. Oh, and in case you missed it, Capcom has released 'Championship' mode for *Street Fighter IV* as a free download.

Thanks Capcom!

Lost Planet 2

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Capcom

Initially 'announced' via Xbox Live, Capcom has since confusingly refused to confirm on the record what formats *Lost Planet 2* is coming out on. Whatever guy. We can tell you that it is definitely going to be released on PS3. Things have warmed up for the sequel with the icy wastes of E.D.N. III melting to reveal lush rain forests. There's also four-player co-op to make alien murdering more of a team sport this time around.



▀ The Lost Planet has thawed out a bit, but it's still crawling with aliens.

UNLEASH YOUR FURY

DYNASTY WARRIORS® *Strikeforce*

dynastywarriorsstrikeforce.co.uk



TEAM UP WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Team work is the key to success as up to four friends can play together.



ULTIMATE BOSS BATTLES

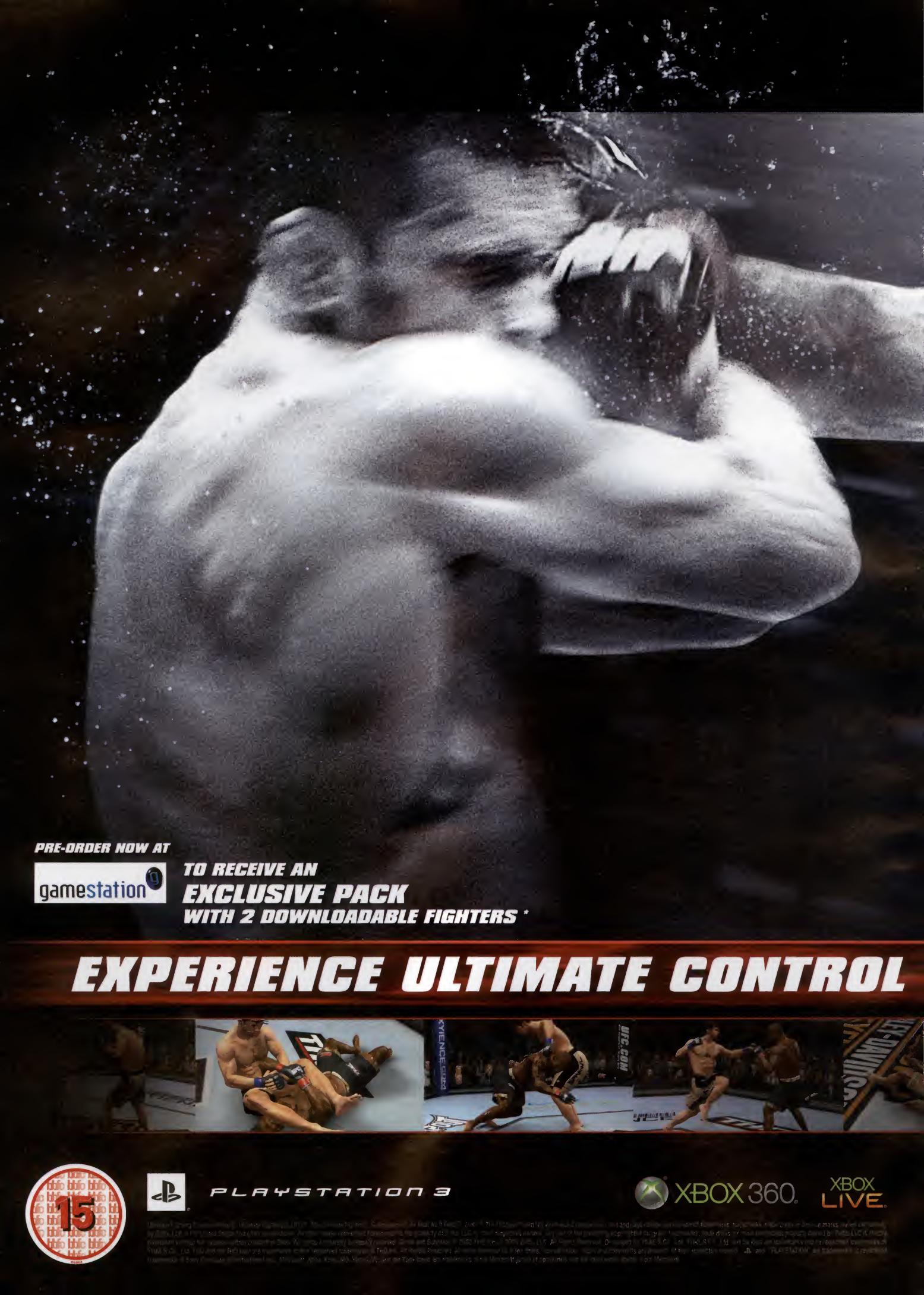
Massive end of level bosses stand between your team and ultimate glory.



UNLEASH YOUR FURY

Witness the power of Fury and take the fight to the skies.

THE MULTI-PLAYER GAME OF 2009 ARRIVES MAY 1



PRE-ORDER NOW AT



TO RECEIVE AN
EXCLUSIVE PACK
WITH 2 DOWNLOADABLE FIGHTERS *

EXPERIENCE ULTIMATE CONTROL



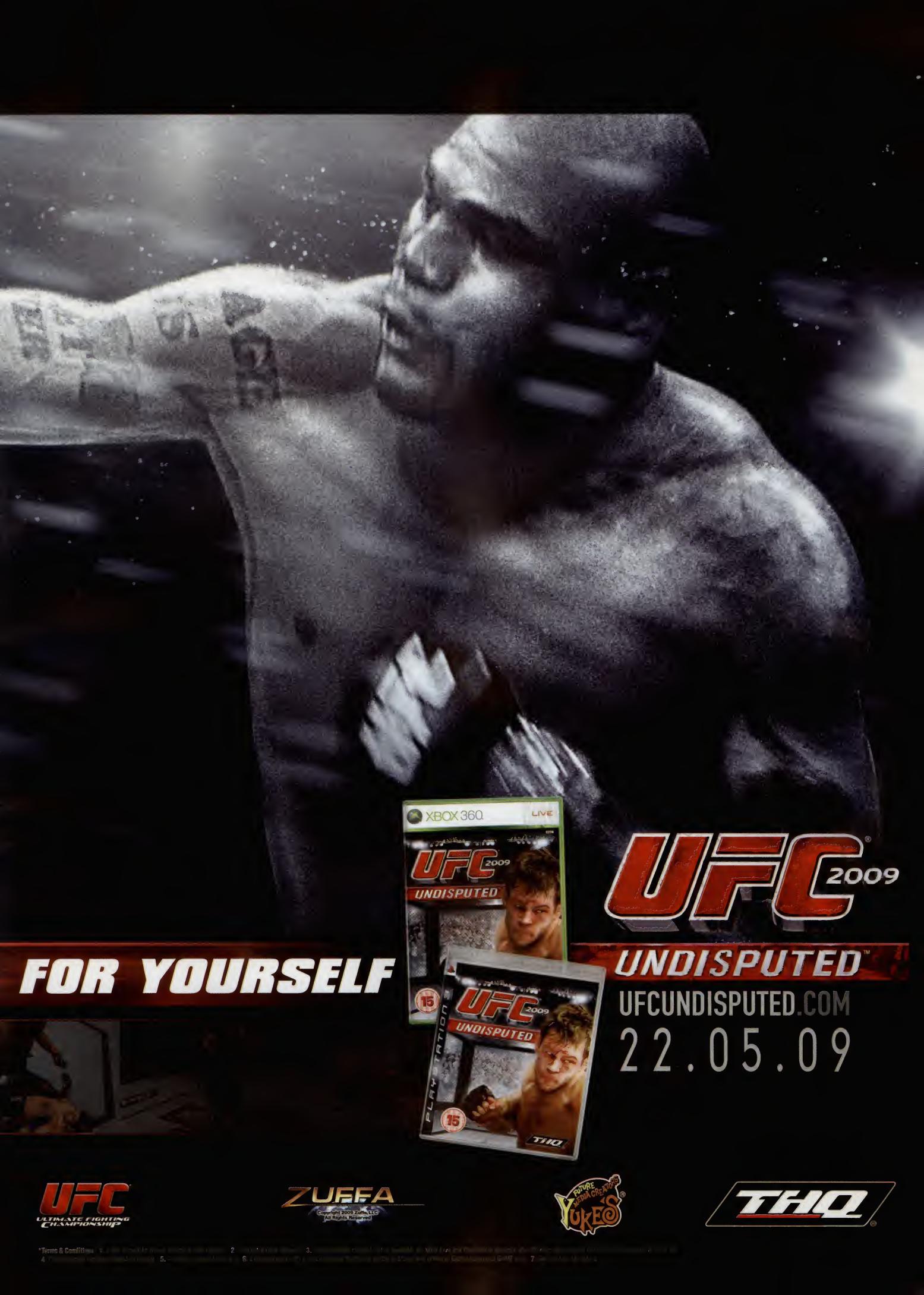
PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360

XBOX
LIVE

© 2008 EA Sports. All rights reserved. EA, the EA logo, EA Sports, UFC, the UFC logo, and the EA Sports UFC logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. and its subsidiaries. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. Electronic Arts Inc. is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by EA MELBOURNE. Published by EA GAMES. © 2008 EA Sports. All rights reserved. EA, the EA logo, EA Sports, UFC, the UFC logo, and the EA Sports UFC logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. and its subsidiaries. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. Electronic Arts Inc. is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by EA MELBOURNE. Published by EA GAMES.



FOR YOURSELF



UFC[®] 2009

UNDISPUTED™
UFCUNDISPUTED.COM
22.05.09

UFC
ULTIMATE FIGHTING
CHAMPIONSHIP

ZUFFA
Copyright 2009 Zuffa, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FUTURE
MEDIA CREATIVES
YUKES®

THQ

*Terms & Conditions 1. The game is not yet available. 2. The game is not yet available. 3. The game is not yet available. 4. The game is not yet available. 5. The game is not yet available. 6. The game is not yet available. 7. The game is not yet available.

ONCE UPON A TIME ON PLAYSTATION 3...

Rockstar takes on another great American myth
with its Western sequel, **Red Dead Redemption**

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
REPORT
PlayStation[®]
Official Magazine U.K.

feature

Red Dead Redemption



063



PlayStation Official Magazine UK



064 The game looks incredible, with dusty plains and aching red sunsets. It's early days, too.

This is the exact moment that we *really* understand what Rockstar is doing with its follow-up to Red Dead Revolver. We're watching hero, John Marston, as he rides slowly out of a desolate town called Tumbleweed following a short, savage shoot-out with some sluggish would-be stick-up men. He crests a small rise, mountains framing the horizon, horse hooves scuffing the dirt, a carrion crow already circling the corpses. And into this quiet scene erupts a monstrous steam engine, all black with a slow-moving train of carriages behind. Suddenly, everything's alive – the crack of a pistol shot interrupts the engine's chug, and Marston turns to see a man running frantically through the prairie brush, away from the town, and away from a pursuing gang on horseback. He startles a pack of coyotes hiding in the field, and screams for help as the gang run him down. They lasso him, firing their guns in the air, and gallop away dragging him behind their horses, his battered body kicking up a trail of dust as they thunder into the distance. Then it's quiet again. Marston catches up with the man a few hundred yards up the trail – his body now a wet, red pile, which the coyotes are fighting over.

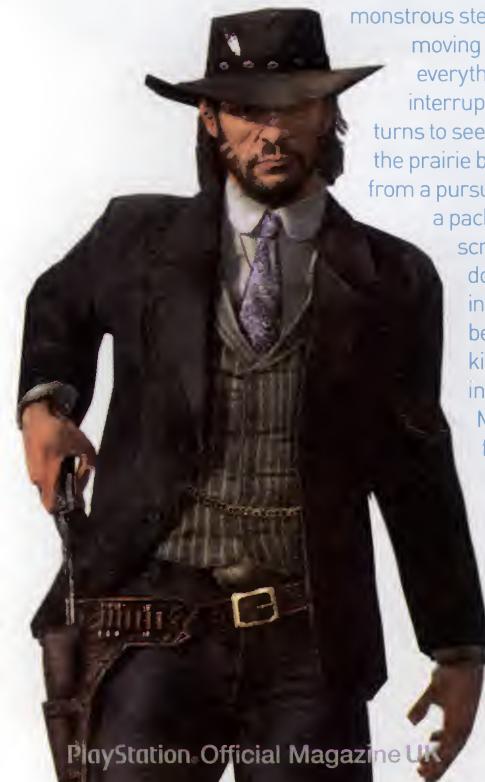
Grand Theft Auto: The Western is an over-simplification, *of course*, but in terms of ambition, scale and quality, Red Dead Redemption is clearly aiming to do to the Western what GTA has done to

the gangster movie, bringing it to life with a look, style and playability that lesser developers than can barely conceive, let alone execute. It's biggest influences are the lean and cool Westerns from Sergio Leone down – Once Upon A Time In The West, Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch, and more recent leftfield outbackers like The Proposition. This isn't a John Wayne game – it's mean and dark and atmospheric, but, just like GTA, it also takes being *fun* really seriously.

A beginning

The setup is this: It's the early Twentieth century – past the classic cowboys and Indians era of the 1800s – and things are changing. Mechanisation is creeping across America, heralded by the march of the great iron horse, the steam train. The industrial revolution is taking hold, and as modernity sets in, the Wild West gets tamer – or, more specifically, gets tamed, by a federal government set on stamping out the gangs and lawlessness that have ruled the frontier for decades. In Red Dead Redemption, this translates into the appearance of the Bureau, an early version of what would later become the FBI – armed men sent out by Washington to bring law to the West. And, according to the game, it's planning to do it by being every bit as ruthless as the gangs it's charged with bringing down.

This is where John Marston comes in, probably to a raw and stirring Ennio Morricone-style soundtrack, and the 'thud-jingle-thud' of spurred boots. Marston is morally ambiguous – which is to say that, in the best tradition of Rockstar's leading men, he's got a good heart and a black, black temper. Naturally, he also looks icily cool in the way only grim gunslingers can: low-brimmed hat casting a shadow over scowling eyes, two scarred lines cutting across a full black beard, dusty black jacket over a waistcoat and tie, and a low-slung gun belt with holstered revolver. He's got the stiff strength and cold eyes of Clint Eastwood's Man With No Name coupled with the beard





Close up: Marston has the same scars as Red Dead Revolver star Red Harlow.

"It's mean and dark and atmospheric – like GTA, it takes being fun seriously."

and rough-cut formal style of Brad Pitt's Jesse James.

Basically, if you were looking to equal the iconic, believably human job you'd done with GTA IV's Niko Bellic, this is the man you would build. Marston's a life-long outlaw, a gang member who's spent time inside but is now something of a reformed character. He's got a new life. He's got a wife, a family. And that's exactly the leverage the Bureau needs when it finds Marston and delivers to him what Rockstar describes as a 'horrific ultimatum.' No further details are forthcoming, but with the Bureau out to bury the gangs Marston used to run with, and Marston having loved ones to protect, it's likely he's forced into co-operating with the Feds to ensure their safety.

Whatever the details, the upshot of Marston's dealings with the Feds is a mission which propels him through the game's three interconnected settings: the dusty towns and emptiness of the Frontier (think the ambushed homestead from Once

Upon A Time In The West), the stark red of Mexico (with its own, transplanted version of Monument Valley, the humbling rock formations made famous in classic John Ford Westerns) and the as-yet-unrevealed Great Plains. The scale is authentically epic – the combined playable area of the game is bigger than any GTA to date, *including* the monstrous San Andreas.

Wide open space

So what does that mean in terms of gameplay? Well, for one thing, Marston will have to make full use of the different modes of transport available to him. The geography of Red Dead is knitted together with America's nascent train network. We wouldn't be surprised if this acted as an instant 'shortcut' way of getting around what promises to be an enormous map (think the taxis in GTA IV), but what's for sure is that trains won't just be for transport. Some missions will see Marston defending ➤

Rockstar San Diego

Smuggler's Run 2 (2001, PS2)

Made while San Diego was still known as Angel Studios, this is an off-road smuggling sequel which played a bit like the driving missions in GTA III only with nothing else to do. Decent, but plagued by insanely brutal police AI and, in the open world era, too much repetition.



Red Dead Revolver (2004, PS2)

Gritty Western original. The game was ditched by Capcom before Rockstar picked it up, skewing the direction away from straight cowboys and Indians and more towards Spaghetti Westerns. The result was one of the most atmospheric shooters on PS2.



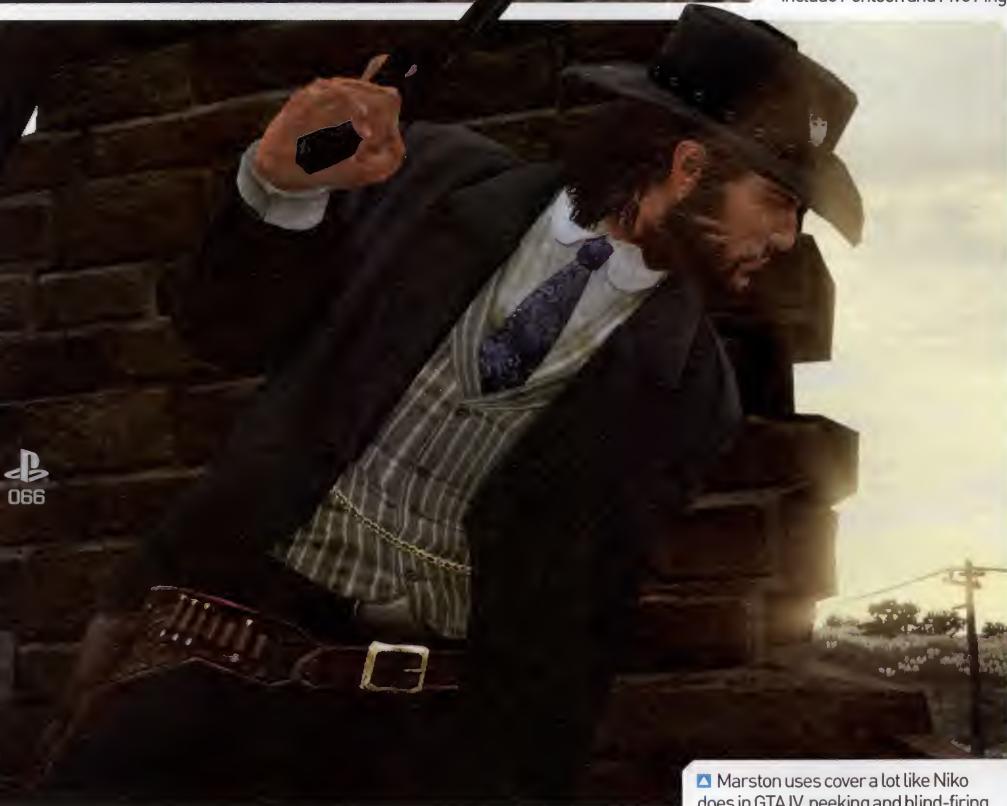
Midnight Club: Los Angeles (2008, PS3)

The latest and best of the studio's long-running street racer series, Los Angeles featured a seamless online mode, incredible new visuals, and realistically modelled in-game Pizza Huts. Pizza Huts! A technical marvel, and a very impressive 9/10.





Feeling lucky? Gambling mini-games include Pontoon and Five Finger Fillet.



Marston uses cover a lot like Niko does in GTA IV, peeking and blind-firing.



"There are several ways to get around: trains, carriages, boats and horses."

trains from bandits, and it's natural to assume he'll also be able to hijack them himself, outpacing the sluggish steamers on horseback and diving onboard to storm the driver's cab.

There are other ways to get around – carriages, boats (an alternate route to Mexico?) and, of course, horses. Marston can acquire trained mounts by simply taking them – from stables or tying posts, presumably, but hopefully also by means of spectacular dives from saloon-roofs and the like (press **A** to horse-jack?). Out in the wild he'll be able to break in and ride wild horses too, if he can find and capture them.

Whether it's an in-game option or not, we'll be giving our horse a name: Pilgrim. And if it dies, we'll get a new one and call it Pilgrim too. Because the nags can die – they can be shot, for one thing. It's the quickest way to deal with enemies on

horseback – aim for their horse (big target) rather than the rider themselves (small target). Thanks to Rockstar San Diego's newly developed hybrid of the RAGE engine and Euphoria software that powered GTA IV, downed horses crumple with with beautifully realistic, context-sensitive animations – pitching forward dramatically and throwing their rider to the floor, or wheeling off to one side before rearing up and collapsing.

Aside from making sure it doesn't get shot, you'll also have to look after your horse's health in less obvious ways. If you push too hard it's possible to ride your horse into the ground, so you'll have to balance your need for speed with the current state of your mount, which can depend on their size, their stamina and even their breed. Rockstar is being careful not to get too deeply involved in this kind of RPG mechanic – lessons were learned

with San Andreas – so Marston won't have to feed or water his horse, just make sure he doesn't spur it to death. The key word is fun – depth, yes, but only to the point where it makes sense in terms of gameplay. As soon as it's a chore, it's out.

Wild bunch

This holds true for Marston's interaction with Red Dead's wider ecology system. Yes, we said 'ecology system'. If you were going to guess the top five features in the new game by the world's coolest games developer it might struggle to make the list, but it's key to Red Dead feeling like a living world rather than an expanse of randomly generated scrub. Remember those coyotes outside Tumbleweed? They were part of this new system – effectively a fully functioning wildlife simulation running in the background that Marston will interact with randomly. And if that sounds dull, then how about this: there are armadillos, rabbits, wolves, cougars, horses, vultures, bears – bears! – living out there in the wild, with smaller animals eaten by larger predators, and those larger predators also posing a threat to unwary humans. You can hunt everything, but again there's a balance to how involved the sequel will be. Expect a quick reward system, like dollars for furs, rather than a health-replenishing cooking mini-game.

The combat, like the animation generally, is very reminiscent of GTA IV. There's a familiar dot-inside-a-circle reticule, which swings with that same third-person camera weightiness familiar from the last time you had Niko light up some fools in Liberty City. The cover system is also similar – Marston crouches and blind-fires just like Bellic, with an outstretched arm and bent wrist, or an over-the-head point and hope. But Marston can also take cover behind moving objects – wagons, slow rolling trains – which opens up a whole new range of tactical possibilities. And, of course, he's also got Dead Eye.

Dead Eye is one of the few things that's been held over from Red Dead Revolver. Again it's a slow-motion combat mode, but this time there are two distinct versions. The first is a basic bullet-time, which you can use with all weapons once the Dead Eye bar is charged (achieved by murdering men). The screen turns sepia, whooshing sounds kick in, and enemies arc and backflip to the ground in gushing bits. The second mode is for pistols only, and adapts the single-shot targeting from the original game. While time is slowed, Marston can pinpoint targets on his enemies – one for each bullet he has in his revolver – before snapping back to normal time and firing all the shots super fast. It replicates the incredible draw-speed of Old West gunslingers perfectly; BANGBANGBANGBANGBANG, and a wave of enemies slumps and falls.

Barrels of fun

The weapons themselves are a realistic mix of what was available at the time. Revolvers and rifles are Marston's bread and butter, but there are also knives, tomahawks, lassos (you will be able to hook and string people up, lynch-style), sniper rifles and, as we see in one mission, shotguns. Here Marston agrees to be the paid muscle for a travelling merchant, who's delivering a wagonside showman spiel to an unimpressed crowd about his wonder tonic. They're so unimpressed, in fact, that they try to jump Marston's employer, leading to a getaway chase with Marston riding shotgun and taking down the onrushing riders (crumpling forwards, wheeling and rearing).

And this is all before we even get to talking about the towns. As well as the wildlife, what makes Red Dead feel alive are its dozens of settlements, from bustling urban centres and single-street towns all the way down to isolated ranches and ➤

Hard choices *The Proposition*

Set in Australia rather than the West, but John Hillcoat's mean outback misadventure about outlaw brothers forced to turn on each other has been identified by Rockstar as striking just the kind of mean and desperate tone it's looking for in Red Dead Redemption.



Software DNA *GTA IV*

Red Dead runs on a customised version of the Euphoria and RAGE software that powers Rockstar's megahit. The family resemblance is all over – the combat, the huge world, and even the way the characters walk and talk.



067

In the mix

The cultural influences behind Red Dead Redemption



Music Nick Cave

Red Dead will have its own specially commissioned score – details of which are yet to be announced – but the style will be cold, lo-fi guitar and strings. Morricone, who scored Leone's Westerns, will be key, but Rockstar is also talking up Nick Cave and Warren Ellis's grinding and sparse soundtrack for *The Proposition*.

Spaghetti Westerns Sergio Leone

The Italian director who made the most influential non-Hollywood Westerns of all time with the Clint Eastwood-starring Dollars Trilogy and *Once Upon A Time In The West*. His films were more stylish and bloodthirsty than their American predecessors, and all the better for it.



feature

Red Dead Redemption



■ We call shotgun! Merchants and other travellers will pay you to protect them on the road.



PS
068

"Galloping alongside the railroad, pistol arm outstretched is super cool."



homesteads. There will be people everywhere you go, sitting around campfires out on the trail, bedding down a wagon train for the night, or just going about their daily business in town. The programming for every AI character will be so complete that you'll be able to follow an individual – a drug store keeper, say – from the moment he rises, through his day at work, and then back home again.

Not that you'll want to – towns become different places at night, and you'll have better things to do, such as heading to the local bar and scouting for action. The one we see Marston visit is a lot like Al Swearengen's place from *Deadwood*, only with many more mounted deer heads. It's a wooden shack brimming with liquor and sawdust, with heavy-lidded ladies peering down on us from a first-floor balcony. "Are they...?" we ask the guys from Rockstar. Nods all round. There's a piano in the corner and though it's daytime right now, it's easy to see how the place will spring to life as the night draws on, all jangling tunes, hands of stud and too much bourbon.

Talking of stud, poker is likely to be one of many mini-games that you'll be able to make (or, if you're us and it's like real life, lose) money on. One that's definitely in and that we see in an early form is Five Finger Fillet. You probably already know it – the game of dare, speed and stupidity in which contestants stab a knife in between their fingers spread on a table-top. A small crowd of shabby onlookers

watches our game, judging the winner (currently it's a button-matching mechanic with painful crunching noises when Marston's knife lands wrong). The mannered language used by these onlookers again puts us in mind of *Deadwood*.

The last mission we see takes place in Mexico. Here, Marston joins forces with the local military to protect a slow-moving mail train from a small army of determined bandits, showcasing the brown-red Mexican deserts, and a whole new side of combat – namely, on horseback. Controls-wise it looks predictably like drive-by shooting in *GTA*, with Marston switching from steering to aiming and back again to stay with the train while lining up shots at the bad guys. But it's also unspeakably cool to look at. Nothing else we've seen makes us want to grab the controller more than the sight of Marston galloping alongside the rails, twisting in the saddle, pistol arm stretched behind him, firing off rounds.

In short, it looks like they've nailed it – that mix of counter-cultural style and peerless playability with which Rockstar has become synonymous. *Red Dead Redemption* is dark and desolate – clearly an adult game – but also full of wit and intelligence. And there's tons more to be revealed. Before we leave there are hints about the big part that online multiplayer will play in the finished game. "We don't want it to be *GTA IV*'s modes in a cowboy outfit," we're told. "We'd much rather build something specific." And given that this 'something' may well include train heists, mounted shoot-outs and impromptu lynchings, it's absolutely what we'd want them to do too.

THE HEAVY METAL
PARTY OF THE YEAR!



METAL HAMMER
GOLDEN GODS
2009

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY...

Blackstar
AMPLIFICATION

ROADRUNNER
RECORDS



Have your say, vote today to win tickets...

WWW.METALHAMMER.CO.UK/GOLDENGODS

In the mood for... Superpowers

Who needs Spandex and a cape when you have the power of PlayStation?

Who hasn't thought about having superpowers? Mutation, telepathy, X-ray vision – any one of which we'd take. The problem is how to get them – the options are just so unpredictable. Experimental genetic manipulation could just as easily turn us into Swamp Thing as it could The Amazing Spider-Man, and 'vegetable-based powers' aren't going to strike fear into the heart of *any* criminal mastermind. But with gaming you get all the thrills of super-human abilities with none of the risks. Forget the predictable heroes with their rubbish games (yes Superman, we mean you). Here we give you the superpowers we'd choose, if only we could find that nuclear reactor...

070



Jennifer Tate (Primal)

Sony's Lara-alike is also pretty and self-reliant, although being part demon sets Jen apart. It enables her to shapeshift, with powers that include incredible strength, baddie-choking tentacles and being able to stop time. She's also backed up by a gargoyle who can heal her at will. Possible date material, but the gargoyle stays home love.



Nathan Hale (Resistance 2)

Thanks to Project Abraham, a program designed to create Chimera-human hybrids, Nathan's already alien-tainted DNA gets a booster. Initially, it just gives him rapid healing and a creepy yellow eye tint. But as the extra genes take over, he turns into a psychokinetic bringer of pain who can make Chimera explode with the power of his mind. Cool!



Jackie Estacado (The Darkness)

Owing as much to Ghostbusters as he does to Goodfellas, this Mafia hood is possessed by a spirit that gives him tentacles of death sprouting from his back. As a result he can create black holes and control an army of demons. His powers only work in the dark, though – even torchlight renders him useless. "Mind that pen light, Jackie!"

Nick Scryer (Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy)

Monosyllabic amnesiac murderer Scryer overcomes his mind-numbingly generic origins by blowing up men's heads Scanners-style. He can mutilate guards with telekinesis, char them with pyrokinesis, or use telepathy to force them to walk off rooftops or into industrial machinery.
[Snigger.]

Jack (BioShock)

Jack, the sole survivor of a plane crash, discovers the sinister underwater city of Rapture and in doing so opens up a world of powers. Plasmids (DNA-altering injections) let you change abilities at will – electrocute or incinerate enemies or even control bees (bees!) by visiting a vending machine. We'll have a cherry coke and a jumbo pack of telekenisis please.

Vamp (Metal Gear Solid 4)

Contrary to what we've read on the nets, bisexuality doesn't qualify as a superpower. Nor does adopting a fighting style that's five parts flamenco to one part Goth knife attack. Having blood full of nanomachines that heal ordinarily fatal wounds faster than you can say AC/DC, however, does. Sadly, when the tech inevitably goes on the fritz, so does Vamp.

Now have your say

Your favourite superpowered hero not here? Email us at opm@futurenet.com and let us know. Here's who didn't power through.

■ Spider-Man might be the archetypal superhero but he's overstayed his welcome on PlayStation.

■ Vader's apprentice, Starkiller, in *The Force Unleashed* might be Captain Bland, but he can barbecue Rancors with lightning.

■ No, Batman doesn't count. He's a superhero, but he doesn't have any powers. To recap: *Batman is just a man*.

We Can



Rebuild

OPM's reviewers outline how they would improve some of PlayStation's biggest games

Everyone's a critic these days. Or at least anyone with a broadband connection, a Blogger account and an eye-wateringly contrary opinion can be. But smashing up a game as bad as *Shellshock 2* is easy. When something's so awful that you actually want to send the developers a care package, there's isn't much point looking for possible improvements – the damage is irreparable. You don't install a new kitchen in a burning house, right? But we got to thinking that maybe we should put our money where our considerable mouths are. Instead of complaining about broken AI and miserable level design, how about we try to come up with gameplay ideas and innovations of our own.

And so we drew up a list comprising some of the biggest games on PlayStation, and asked our resident experts how they could be improved. Some needed total reinvention – games that have been trading on their heritage for far too long – while for others it was more a light sprinkle of magic dust that was required to bring back the good times. Judge for yourself whether we've got it right over the page, and then join the debate on the forums at officialplaystationmagazine.com.





feature

We Can Rebuild Them

them



feature

We Can Rebuild Them



DEBUT
2001



PLAYSTATION GAMES
EIGHT



PRODUCER
SHINGO 'SEABASS' TAKATSUKA



LAST OEM SCORE
9/10

Pro Evolution Soccer

A 12-point manifesto for getting PES back to the top of the table

1 Fix the online mode

Since it was patched, PES's one-on-one network matches just about work, but the two-vs-two matches are still broken like James Caan's ankle in Misery. Given that arch rival FIFA offers ten-vs-ten, that's just not good enough, and a sure sign that Konami's team has struggled with the generational transition. Fans now expect stable servers and fully-customisable matchmaking as a given. Anything less will be considered a deal-breaker from now on.

2 Real money in Master League

Not securing the Premier League licences is one thing, but there's no excuse for damaging authenticity further by using points instead of Sterling or the Euro. To be honest, at this point we'd rather have Zimbabwean Dollars rather than Master League's meaningless magic beans. The good news is this looks like being fixed for PES 2010.

We want to see the exact moment 'nando twangs his hammy and the Liverpool fans begin their blubbering.



3 Sort out the transfer system

Right, so I've won the treble two seasons running, I'm offering 40,000 pretend-o-points and a salary that makes Jonathan Ross seem hard done by, and Xabi Alonso still doesn't want to come to the Arsenal?

4 Much better commentary

"These two managers will share a bottle of wine after this, but now for some whining." What? Jon Champion actually isn't awful, but at least give him something sensible to say. Then get Graham Taylor in on the co-commentary instead of the aural Mogadon that is Mark 'sad sack' Lawrenson.

5 Much, much better chants

Playing as Man United: CHAMP-IONS! CHAMP-IONS! CHAMP-IONS!

CHAMP-IONS! CHAMP-IONS!

Playing as Barca: BAR-CA! BAR-CA! BAR-CA! BAR-CA! BAR-CA! BAR-CA!

Repeat for 90 virtual minutes or until you hang yourself with a USB lead. Konami needs to hire some real fans to recreate each club's most famous songs (note: plural). You should also be able to switch on versions with explicit lyrics, in the same way as opting for blood in a shooter. "Oh Steve Gerrard, Gerrard, he's big and f***ing hard..."

6 New contact lenses for your keeper

Because it might help him see that Adidas Teamgeist 2 which is drifting agonisingly past his left arm. Yet again. There nothing makes the 'scripting' process more obvious – scripting in the sense of Pro Evo's AI conspiring to let a late goal in and thereby avoid a draw (which it secretly hates) – than your keeper suddenly developing a blind spot the size of Jupiter.

7 Better shooting

Sometimes even the best players in the world miss sitters.

[Looks accusingly at Emmanuel Adebayor.] But the voodoo of getting a shot on target in PES – "it's okay, all you've got to do is wait until it's on his left foot and he's perfectly in his stride pattern" – is preposterous. Oh, and someone might want to tell the game's mastermind, Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka, that £30m players can shoot from tight angles, rather than always having to be directly facing the goal. You're supposed to be competing with FIFA not Sensible Soccer.

DEBUT

1997

PRODUCER

KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI

Gran Turismo

How we'd like to drive Sony's flagship racer

8 More glitz in the Master League

Here's where PES can really take on and beat FIFA. Sex up the management side of the Master League mode. Think job offers from other clubs, leaking stories to the press, 'losing' the dressing room, more injuries, hiring coaching staff and assistants, falling out with the director of football, getting caught tapping up hateful left backs, Newcastle-style fan rebellions. There's a vast amount of untapped potential here. Static images of fans celebrating in a café after a match don't cut it. Fans in a bloody café, Konami!?

9 No more cheat characters

Is it written into the contract that whoever appears on the box (Henry, Ronaldo, Messi) will be able to ride any tackle like a Texan rodeo champion?

10 Improved crowds

Fans often accuse each other of being plastic, but PES 2008's were cardboard – and would've shamed the Mega Drive's chipset. (And what's with the banners. 'Who ate all the pies?' It's like some *Life On Mars* timewarp.) Thanks to some clever use of depth of field blurring the cardboard crowd wasn't quite so noticeable in 2009, but there's still a lot of room for improvement. Check out the amazing crowds in Sony's MLB: The Show series to see how it should be done. Oh, and enough with the celery signs already.

11 Worse injuries

Don't make that face. Having your leg broken like a stale breadstick by a journeyman centreback is a key part of the, uh, beautiful game. Currently PES just lets you know how many weeks your precocious Spanish ballerina will be out of action for. We need specifics: ripped ligaments, popped joints and bizarre groin knacks. Oh, and more animations please, including your teammates recoiling in horror.

12 Get official licences for all the Premier League clubs

Well, you know, it's just an idea. We're big on blue sky thinking and all that.

1 Do crashes

No, not damage. Crashes. Twisting, spinning metal cartwheels of death that send you skywards when you clip a barrier at 120mph. The original Gran Turismo brilliantly channelled all the PS1's power into simulating driving, leaving nothing left to process inertia, impacts and rebounds. You can't build the most realistic driving sim known to man and then fill it full of cars that aren't subject to the laws of physics.

2 Make more original tracks

Polyphony is famous for its cars, but should be revered for its tracks. Trial Mountain, El Capitan, Grand Valley, Citta di Aria, Seattle and Tokyo beat almost anything real. Make more! Keep the Nordschleife, though. The venerable German circuit really is amazing and GT's recreation is the most accurate.

3 Make the mechanics more realistic

Power (and torque) outputs never rise in a linear fashion, as they seem to in GT now. Powerful engines present extra challenges as well as possibilities and Gran Turismo would be instantly more exciting with authentic power

curves. That much horsepower should feel crazy and, at the same time, affect the handling. Instead it's almost impossible to spin. Power oversteer is rare (but knife-edged) and lift-off oversteer is lame. Even in a Ferrari F40 horrible throttle abuse causes little concern when it should feel dangerous and untamed.

4 Add customisation

We're not talking *Need For Speed*-type stuff here, just a few subtle changes: bring back the shop full of alloys, then give us wheelarch extensions and personalised number plates. And throw in a nice rusty, filler-covered clunker with ripped seats, faded plastic spotlamps and an overflowing ashtray. One we can tune to hell and beat the supercars with. Oh, and we'd like a roof rack please – purely for the comedy value.

5 Sign Porsche and Lamborghini

So you finally scored Ferrari for the 'ultimate driving simulator' and almost Porsche (via those heavily tuned RUFs). Now do it properly, Polyphony! We love niche motors like TVR, Zonda and DeLorean, but Ferrari, Porsche and Lamborghini defined supercars. ►



Since GT is so keen on realism, why are crash physics still neglected?



DEBUT
1987



PLAYSTATION GAMES
SIX



LAST OPM SCORE
10/10

Metal Gear Solid

This is how we'd resequence Solid Snake's DNA

1 Return to pure stealth

Making Snake as handy in a shoot-out as he's always been at stealth wasn't just welcome in MGS4 – thanks to the game's chaotic battlefield, it was damn near essential. And that's potentially worrying. While nobody wants a return to the days when alerting more than one guard meant reacting with the calm professionalism of a child evading a wasp, silent, *buttock-clenching* stealth was always what set MGS apart from a world of me-too shooters. Want to keep the series on top? Dial down the shooty, and get back to evasion.

2 Run Kojima's dialogue past a script doctor

There is a mistaken belief among certain gamers that part of what makes Metal Gear brilliant is Kojima's philosophy-soaked dialogue. Wrong. It's his ideas and attention to detail that makes the series a classic. His dialogue is and always has been riper than stilton on a hot tin roof, so why not get a script doctor to tighten it up? It's not as if it'd be hard to find someone to lend a hand. David Hayter, the man who voices Snake, is a professional Hollywood screenwriter for chrissakes.

3 Scrap close-quarter combat and start over

In the world of covert operations, nothing says 'amateur hour' more effectively than sneaking up on an enemy and, instead of silently wrestling them to the floor, clumsily hugging them like a randy tramp before getting all sorts of shot to death. Unfortunately, with MGS's current melee combat system, this is distressingly frequent. The answer? Simplify

the system but make it rock-solid, or create a toggle on/off melee option that gives Snake a flexible moveset mapped to the whole pad.

4 Fix the auto-aim

There was a marked increase in full-on combat in *Guns Of The Patriots*, so the inclusion of an auto-aim option was a nice idea. That said, in practice it was stickier than a bogey, with the prioritising skills of a toddler in a theme park. Tighten it up or leave it out.

5 Have guest directors

There's no question that Hideo Kojima should retain overall creative control over MGS. That said, the series' DNA is now so firmly established that letting big-name guest directors loose would be possible without the subsequent games' innate Metal Gearnness being lost in the process. Imagine a Shinji 'Resi' Mikami take on it, or MGS5 by Goichi 'Killer 7' Suda? You'd reinvigorate and constantly reinvent the series, making it the James Bond of videogames. Koj would approve of that.

6 Go episodic

Developing on the current generation of consoles is pricy. Team this with the current End Days economic climate and it's not hard to imagine that even a halo series like MGS could fall prey to nervous Konami bean counters. One solution would be to keep Metal Gear's notoriously high standards but drip feed the quantity in DLC acts. Episodic MGS would keep the accountants happy with regular revenue while enabling the dev team to create another XXL adventure without compromising on the trademark attention to detail.

7 Improve the watch/play balance

It's hard to ignore the fact that you can spend almost as much time watching MGS4 as you do actually playing it. This imbalance needs to be addressed if the series is to win over the nonbelievers. Either tweak the watch/play ratio or provide two playing options. The first with short, stylish manga-style briefings and plot reveals, and a second, director's cut with Kojima's full, unexpurgated cut-scenes. Everyone's happy.

8 Don't dilute the series

Metal Gear is a series with Obama-grade goodwill among PlayStation gamers, so why *wouldn't* Konami want to milk the cash cow ever more vigorously? Problem is, with every so-so Metal Gear Acid or faddy Metal Gear Touch, the integrity and potency of the main series – two big releases in the life of every PlayStation console – diminishes. Before you know it, OPM is reviewing Metal Gear Kart racer and a bona fide videogame event has become a laughing stock.

9 Kill off Raiden

He may have been given mad cyborg ninja skillz in MGS4, but as his mawkish, godawful reinvention as a new dad in *Guns Of The Patriots*' final reel underlined, however you dress up MGS2's blond dumbbell, he blows. Nobody liked your rookie, Kojima – get over it and give MGS5's top slot to either Meryl or a newcomer. Either will have more balls than that emo baby.

Can we beef up **Tekken's** game?

1 Release it properly

An obvious one to start. Let's have a proper release for *Tekken 6*, yeah? Rather than – as with *Tekken 5* – a game delivered to us on an instalment plan: the PSP version *here*, the PSN arcade version *here*, the online patch *here*, *Tekken* is – or at least should be – a big series, so for Heihachi's sake give it the big platform it deserves. Stop fiddling with the arcade version and port it, in its entirety, to PS3.

2 Lose the walls

Find a man who enjoys being pinned to a wall and beaten senseless without being able to defend himself and we'll find you irrefutable proof of the existence of God. Having tea with Jesus. Nothing – not even *Soulcalibur*'s enraging ring-out system – measures up to the howling fury of being glued to *Tekken*'s arena wall like a doomed fly struggling on a piece of fly-paper. Get rid of them.

3 Drop the circus act

Enough with the juggling. Ominously, the arcade version of *Tekken 6* introduces the Bound system, which makes opponents bounce after they're floored, opening them up to even more combo-extending cheapery. In a series where you can already be juggled ridiculously (jab-jab-jab-jab GET OUT) when you're in the air, this is an awful idea. Please God ditch it before it hits PS3.

4 Fix Jin...

...and Law. Just put them back the way they were. Without wanting to sound too much like we're saying 'just make the whole thing like *Tekken 3*', why don't we just try making a few things a bit more like they were, you know, in *Tekken 3*? And let's start with these two. We can always talk about putting Paul's trip-combo back in later. And bringing back the insane menu music. And – you get the idea.





10

If in doubt,
bring back
Snake

Between Naked Snake and Solid, there are decades of covert action stretching back to the 1940s that are ripe for the MGS treatment. Can't get Meryl or the new guy to work? Then don't be afraid to resurrect the sneak daddy supreme. You know it's what we all want.



Silent Hill

Sharpen those rusty knives

1 Fix the combat

So far Silent Hill has tried two methods: making your character incapable of handling any weapons properly at all, leaving you like a baby rabbit in a tiger cage, or turning them into an ex-soldier super commando who can dodge *any* attack with just a button press. If we could just have something in-between, stabbing those busty nurses to death would be much more satisfying.

2 No recycling

Only a recent problem, but Silent Hill Homecoming broke all the rules when old fan favourite Pyramid Head popped up. We love his rusty old triangular face, but he was a manifestation of James Sunderland from SH2's personal demons, so his presence made absolutely no sense. If we're to be killed by a psycho sexual manifestation of dark emotions, we want them to be original ones goddamnit.

3 New locations

Schools and hospitals. They might be creepy and a good excuse to get the sexy/horrifying nurses involved, but we've visited Silent Hill's intensive care ward more times than a clumsy lumberjack. Even Homecoming, set in new town Shepherd's Glen, started with a trip to AGE. Surely Silent Hill has a supermarket we can explore? A collection of abandoned warehouses? A strip club?

4 Realistic dialogue

If you're going to make us talk to all the mad people, help us to enjoy it. A few oblivious and barmy characters are fine, but how about someone who can offer a little bit of advice, or even the option to ask? I'm pretty sure my character wants to know why they're being chased by rabid zombie dogs before they ask about how old Mrs Abernathy is doing, or if the old boat house is still there.

5 Ban keypads

All the technology of PS3, all the horrors of the parallel world, and your survival all comes down to whether or not you can punch the right numbers into an old keypad. There are plenty of ways to trap us, and broken doors, locks and codes are all starting to feel mighty tired. Find a new way to keep us out.

6 Save us

You've upgraded your hard drive, you've cleared off that embarrassing Conan save, the least Silent Hill can do is let you have as many saves as you need, instead of limiting you to five. Old fashioned save points are just about excusable, but making us replay a whole game to see that alternative ending is downright cruel.



feature

We Can Rebuild Them



DEBUT
2003



PLAYSTATION GAMES
FIVE



LAST OPM SCORE
8/10

Call Of Duty

More Generation Kill, less Saving Private Ryan

1 Sort out the spawning

Usually, playing COD is your own personal action movie in which constant trigger-pumping and continual danger keep things exciting. Apart from when an entire army seem to pour out of a small Afghani potting shed. Even worse is when bad guys keep coming until you cross a magic line on the floor. After spending hours fending off a wave and feeling as if you're single-handedly battling all the world's wrongs it's crushing to discover you were only one step away from 'the next bit'.

2 Co-op missions

Not just a single-player game with co-op added, but a specific team-based story. If you haven't played Resistance 2's co-op campaign yet then check it out. Played with friends it's one of the best multiplayer experiences going.

3 Mission-based multiplayer

Headquarters or Search And Destroy are both great examples of more involved multiplayer, requiring communication, strategy and teamwork, rather than the straightforward deathmatch bundle. What we'd like are multiplayer missions with even more depth. SOCOM's Hostage Extraction games are a great example, where one team fight to rescue a VIP being held by the opposition.

4 Single-player weapon customisation

Being able to tweak your guns in online is one of the best bits of the game. Double magazine or red-dot sight? Grenade launcher or silencer? It would be great to get that kind of

individuality in the main game, adjusting your loadout to reflect how you want to fight. That said, we absolutely don't want to see a full Perks system or any character classes as it would unbalance the single-player's carefully tuned action.

5 Include a map editor

Far Cry 2's map editor was a revelation, opening up a world of user-created multiplayer maps. Now imagine a LittleBigPlanet-style community making and rating maps, sifting through everything to make sure you only have to bother with the good ones. A constant supply of new battlefields, and instead of Map Packs you could download new environments and objects to build with every few months.

6 More destructible environments

Why stop at bullet penetration? Call Of Duty is already a loud and terrifying face-full of explosive panic. Why not throw in full physics and completely destructible objects using the tech from Star Wars: The Force Unleashed. Then fire a M203 grenade launcher down a street and watch cars buckle and tear as the explosion flips them into the air. Imagine running for cover as broken glass rains down from the sky like hail and the wall you're hiding behind explodes into rubble.

7 Bring back Price

We simply refuse to accept he's dead. He just can't be. Hopefully we'll know for sure next month.



Helping Hitman make a cleaner kill

1 Open up

Note: We do not want a GTA-style open world game. However, we should be able to climb anything that looks climbable. Altair from Assassin's Creed can scamper around the parapets, so why can't Agent 47? Hitman's genius lies in the freedom of its puzzle-solving nature so the more options we have, the better.

2 Crowd pleaser

Blood Money had some astonishing crowd scenes. But most civilians simply wandered about the place randomly or stared into space. You'd have to wave a Glock in their faces just to get a reaction. We want GTA IV's amazing hustle and bustle in the next Hitman - people who behave and respond realistically - ie terrified.

3 Make do

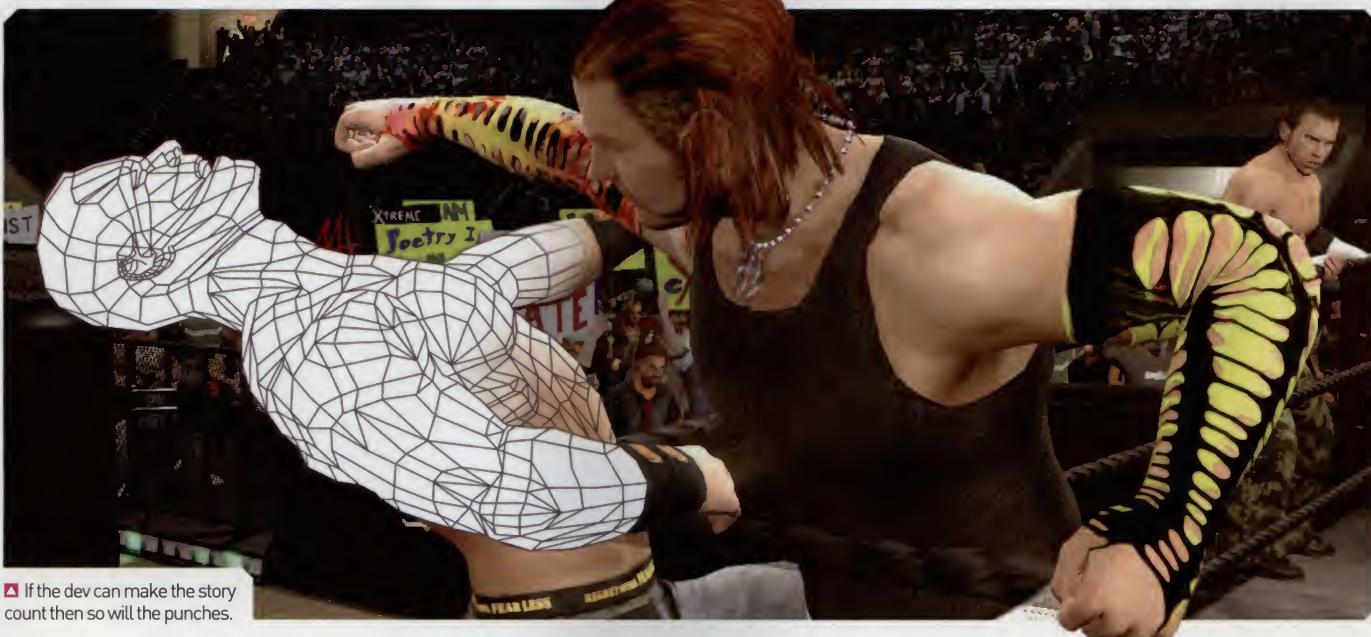
As assassins we like to improvise. We want to waltz weapon-free and near-naked through security, only to beat the target to death with his own telephone. If Jason Bourne's ashtray/pencil/magazine/cuddly toy approach to killing has taught us anything it's that everything is lethal and we'd like to see that here.

4 Enemy AI

Hitman's trigger-happy AI can be an unpredictable deal-breaker. If enemies could refrain from running into corpse-filled choke points and into your weary gunfire, that'd be a start. Can we also try and make sure jumpy guards don't suddenly open fire just because you're walking funny. You can't kill a man just for jogging.

5 Comedy gold

In previous games you could follow people to see what they got up to before you (inevitably) killed them. Things like a pervy security guard sniffing his clients underwear or a drunken clown shambling around before a children's party. These secret routines were always a non-garrotting-based treat and we want more of them.

DEBUT
2000PLAYSTATION GAMES
TENLAST OPM SCORE
8/10DEVELOPER
YUKE'S

■ If the dev can make the story count then so will the punches.

WWE Smackdown vs Raw

We make sure Smackdown brings the pain rather than causes it

079

1 Fix season mode

Getting a few stars to record audio for cut-scenes is pointless without storylines. General Manager mode from SVR 2006 had it almost perfect - so THQ bafflingly removed it!

2 Stop the tinkering

Blu-ray disc space is colossal, so why keep ditching good features? Bring back I Quit and Triple Threat Tornado Tag matches, and create-a-PPV.

3 The ultimate crib

Yuke's new UFC Undisputed 2009 game is streets ahead of Smackdown in how it handles grappling, fist fights, and pretty much everything else. Chuck away the decade-old Smackdown code and start again with the UFC engine.

4 Sort the physics

If a third wrestler is in the ring and gets accidentally caught by a stray elbow the game shouldn't ignore it. Games like Madden and FIFA manage it with 22 players on-screen at once, rendering Smackdown's 'just pretend nothing happened' approach utterly inexcusable.

5 Keep up!

Live roster updates are now common in sports games, and it's time Smackdown followed suit. The recent FIFA DLC proved demand is there, and few would care if it cost, say, 99p per downloadable character.

6 We need Legends

WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania was ruined by its shallow gameplay. Yet many would have bought it simply to export its historic roster of grapplers from Wrestlemania into Smackdown. But the two were only compatible in the opposite direction. Rectify this next year, please.

7 Show some lady love

Real life WWE Divas are big, athletic, sexy girls. In Smackdown they're weightless, skeletal waifs with calcium-deficient bones and hair sculpted from wet clay. Do not want.

8 All about survival

The first Smackdown on PS2 could manage eight wrestlers in the ring at once - but none have since. For WWE games to feel truly comprehensive, eight-man matches are a must.

9 See you out back

Fighting across interlocking backstage arenas was a fun part of Smackdown's early days, yet for some reason PS3 has been stuck with a couple of limp environments. Let's return to the days of multiple backstage areas.

10 Fix the Royal Rumble

Seriously, right now it's beyond stupid. Why can I just stand by the ropes, eliminating each new competitor as soon as he's climbed into the ring? Just dumb.

11 More outfits

Few WWE superstars have worn the same outfit every night of their career, so every wrestler in the game should have at the very least one alternative costume.

12 Creationism attacked

Why can I not be trusted to assign my own stats and attributes to created wrestlers? I'm not a baby who's going to give them all 99 OVRs, so don't make me spend 20 hours ploughing through matches to make each one competitive.

Next month in...

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

On sale
9 June

Subscribe
today on page
38



Modern Warfare 2

The best game on PS3 returns
The world exclusive first look



Follow us at twitter.com/OPM_UK
or email us at opm@futurenet.com

Whether you want to whisper in our delicate pink ears or you fancy hearing from us in the middle of the night, there are now more ways than ever to interact with your pals at Official PlayStation Magazine. Of course, if you prefer purple biro, you can still write an *actual letter* to us at Official PlayStation Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. We'll reply to the best correspondence in the next issue.

Stuff we'd really like to hear about...

- Do you actually care about the so-called console war?
- **What features would you like more/less of in the mag?**
- Do you prefer the look of inFamous or Prototype?
- **What's the most fanboyish thing you've ever seen?**

The OPM review setup



Our review code is tested on hi-def and standard-def TVs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Reviews



Your essential guide to every new release

Good news, people: we have three big exclusives for you, the first of which is cover game *inFamous*. We never truly got the 'hook' of *inFamous* until we played the finished game. Then we couldn't stop playing it. There's no single amazing 'you gotta see this because of this' thing about it, it's just supremely playable and ranks alongside *Uncharted*, *Killzone* and *MGS4* among PS3's most valuable exclusives, and you should absolutely play it.

Next up is *UFC 2009 Undisputed*, another game which showed early promise but turns out to be a total knockout. And before you panic – it's *nothing* like *Smackdown*. After that there's hugely ambitious open-world off-road racer *Fuel*, which proves to be a stellar addition to Codies' ever more impressive garage.

And we've still got room for *Guitar Hero Metallica*, *Wolverine*, *Bionic Commando* and loads more. See you next month, when we'll be squeezing awkwardly into Batman's rubber slacks.



INFAMOUS

Like *Grand Theft Auto* with superpowers? Kinda. Three islands and an open world full of zap fill *Sucker Punch*'s awesome comic book actioner.



UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

A lean, brutal monster compared to *Smackdown*'s wheezy old stager. Ready for some homoerotic ground and pound? Of course you are!



FUEL

When the ecopocalypse comes, the only thing that will survive are men on an off-road stag do who are wearing fire retardant suits. Worrying times.

How we score our reviews...

10 Essential

Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

9 Outstanding

Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

8 Very good

Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

7 Good

Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

6 Reasonable

A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

5 Average

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

4 Below average

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

3 Poor

A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

2 Awful

A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

1 Horrific

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.



Our highest accolade

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.

**WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
REVIEW**
PlayStation®
Official Magazine • UK



Info

Format PS3 ETA 29 May Pub
Sony Dev Sucker Punch Players
1 Web snipurl.com/fv6gw
It's like GTA with superpowers,
or Sly Cooper with messes of
open-world crime.

Shockingly good

inFamous

Meet Cole, the brightest spark on PlayStation 3

Like all the best things – the universe, firework displays, people – inFamous starts with a bang. It happens, in real time, from *within* the start-up menu, which, before that point, has shown a relaxed corner of the game's San Francisco-like setting, Empire City. It's an attention-grabbing intro, and it leaves our hero (or anti-hero, more on which shortly) slightly crispy, and at the bottom of a very big hole. Two apparently unrelated things then happen, as retold through the game's brilliant, ink-splashed dynamic comic book cut-scenes. A plague sweeps across the city, turning the whole place into a crime-ridden disaster zone, and forcing the government to establish a quarantine. Mutated hooded gangs rule the streets, sanitation goes to hell, you can't get a taxi *anywhere* – it's awful. And, at the same time, Cole, our blast-surviving leading man, develops superpowers. Sparkly, electric ones.

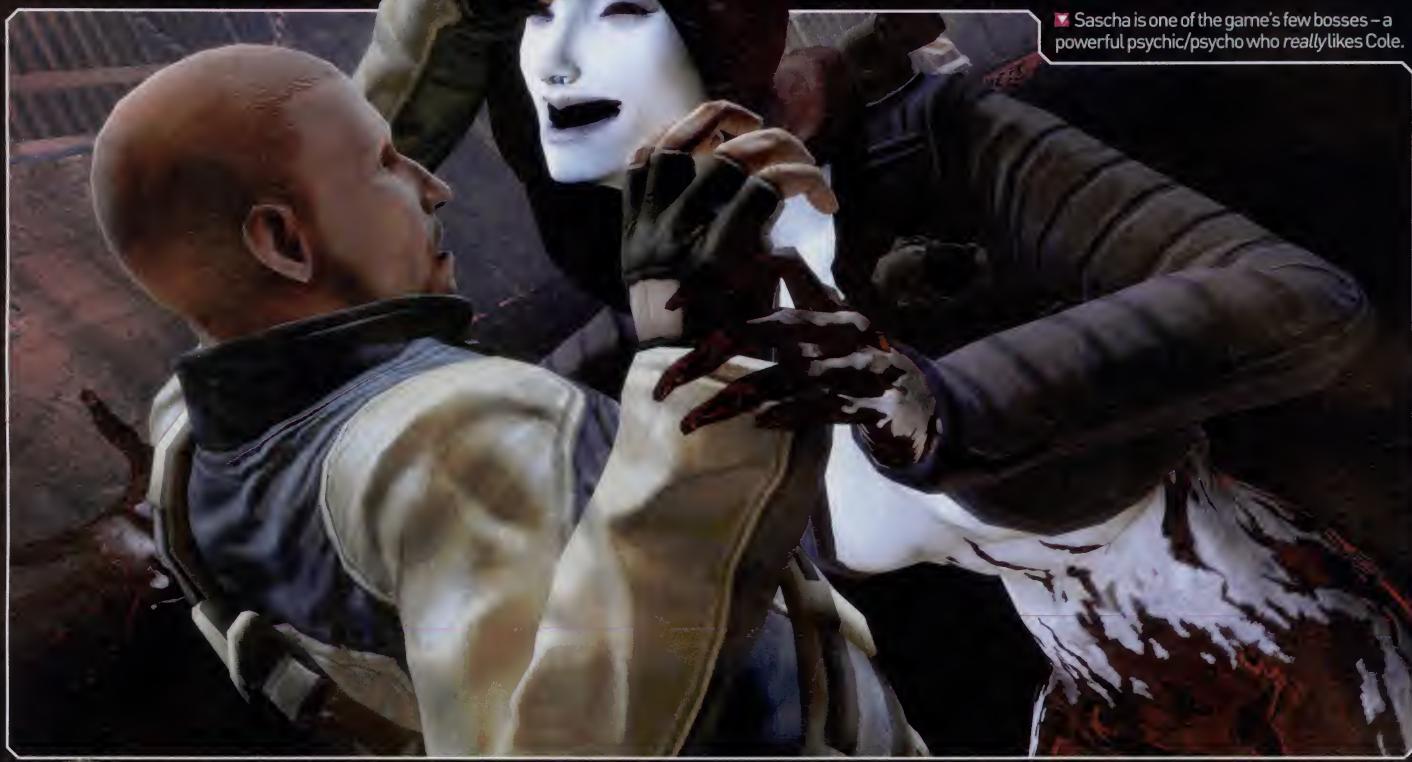
It's a classic setup, in comic terms – a great disaster, and the emergence of a new hero with the potential to set things right again. From start to finish, inFamous makes excellent, unflashy use of the superhero sensibility it borrows from the best graphic novels (think the twisted realism and moral intelligence of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*). It influences both the game's tight plot, and also its ace, distinctive visuals, which mix the clean urban detail of GTA (grand skylines and gorgeous lighting) with a slightly fantastic cartoon edge (monstrous enemies and crackling powers).



What you do in... inFamous







▀ Sascha is one of the game's few bosses – a powerful psychic/psycho who really likes Cole.



2up

second opinion

Name Tim Clark
Angle Evil mastermind

"It's an oddly old-fashioned game, inFamous, not in terms of design but because it's pretty much all fun, all the time. Every element – from the snap, crackle, pop superpowers to the brilliant climbing – remains enjoyable from start to finish. It's also helped by generous checkpoints, a beautifully judged progression curve, and a properly interesting story. A total triumph then – I just hope PS3 gamers give it a try."

Best for...

Getting drunk on power

The game's not just a looker, it's also structured really smartly, which sounds like a dull thing to be good at, but is actually crucial and brilliant. You start on a rooftop, the temporary home of your slacker buddy Zeke. At this point you can only do the basics. There's a 'simple' lightning bolt, which you aim using **△** and fire with **□** (your beginner's pop-gun), a Force-style push triggered with **⊗** (which drains your electro-energy, unlike the basic zap), and climbing. *Really* good climbing.

On the up

It's good in two ways: it's super-powered, for one thing, so Cole can



▀ Basic zapping ammo is unlimited, so there's no reason not to spray lightning as fast as you can.

drop from any height without hurting himself, catch any ledge without finger-tip slipping, and scale just about any building (or giant industrial crane) in the city. And it's also good because it *feels* brilliant, a lovely balance of speed, fluidity and looseness on the one hand, and path-finding challenge on the other. There are occasional frustrations when the game wants to lock you onto the wrong piece of scenery, but it's a muscular and liberating experience that makes Assassin's Creed seem clumsy and Prince Of Persia feel like it's running on autopilot. It's also the element of inFamous that is most reminiscent of Sucker Punch's creeping, cat-burgling PlayStation 2 series Sly Cooper. Like Insomniac moving from Ratchet & Clank to Resistance, and Naughty Dog from Jak And Daxter to Uncharted, inFamous sees another big Sony studio graduate from a previously cartoonish world into a fully-fledged,



Five sights to see in inFamous



RUINED SKYLINE

Climbing to the highest points in the game – a huge dockside crane, a giant tower made of rubbish – affords you a stunning view of Empire City's shattered skyline stretching into the distance.



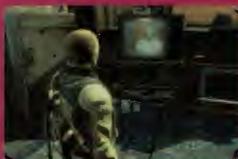
HOT DEATH BALLOONS

In maybe the best of the mission-based set-pieces, Cole must track down and destroy hot air balloons that are spraying a devilish mind-control gas over the population of Empire City.



RAIL RIDING

Fizzing along the rails using Cole's induction glide power, the river and collapsed bridge in the distance, pretending you're the Electric Express, is cool even if the pose is a bit too Riverdance.



NEWS BULLETINS

Your acts of heroism/villainy will be reported – and twisted – by two rival news sources: a Fox News-alike propaganda channel, and a self-styled pirate broadcaster called the TV Jacker.



THUNDER STORM

Sort of a spoiler, because this is the end-game power: a huge, raking lightning strike, which immolates everything in its path. Makes you feel like a god, in a good Old Testament kind of way.



Red-hooded Reapers are the entry-level enemies. Soon you'll be toasting them for fun.

grown-up adventure.

As you explore the world and strike up a relationship with mission-dealing FBI agent Moya, you'll be given the location of electrical sub-stations that you need to reactivate. Head to the marker on your GTA-style mini-map, jump into the sewer and you'll have

DevTalk

inFamous



"We went with electricity because we wanted to be spectacular at one thing. It has a deep connection to the urban landscape."

Nate Fox
Game director,
Sucker Punch

"inFamous is brave enough to dish out its powers slowly and steadily."

a short pipe-and-platform obstacle course to run before juicing up a generator and restoring a portion of the city's power grid. These sub-stations form the spine of the story missions, and each one you reactivate opens up new tasks and areas, plus a new power.

The other story missions push the plot forward and offer up the game's flashy set-pieces – investigating the deadly black goo polluting the city's water supply, for instance, which leaves Cole fighting through woozy hallucinations. Or defending the city prison from an invasion of battering

psychic monsters while standing on a charged electric platform, which ensures you never run low on explosive power. Then there are the location-specific side-missions. These are more formulaic (blast 12 surveillance devices off *this* building, clear out *this* gang of Reapers) and tend to be repeated several times through the game. But they're still fun to play – compelling, even, thanks to the constant promise of extra XP, and also the fact that each mission 'clears' a small percentage of the map of enemies, giving you a strong incentive to just play one more, one ➤

With cars nearby you've always got a ready supply of juice should you need a recharge.





✓ Cole's melee attacks are simple, satisfactorily brutal and not over-used. Works well – bosh!

more, one more...

In fact, the whole game is brilliantly moreish. The powers themselves are teased out slowly and steadily, so that every time you get a new something – sticky electro grenades, for instance (L1 to aim and then @), or the sniper-style precision shot (hold ↑ to zoom) – it's like a new toy you're being spoiled with. They're given out sparingly, to the extent that Cole's ultimate superpower is only unlocked for the last stretch, which, depending how deep you go into the side missions, comes after a good ten or so hours of gameplay.

Power up forever

To a point these new powers follow the standard curve you'd expect from a more traditional shooter – grenades and sniper as mentioned, then rockets in the shape of the megawatt hammer (L1 and @) and a 'kill everything, all the time' trumper to finish. Not that this is a bad thing, as they're all ace to use. The precision shot slows time (perfect for thinning out a crowd or nailing targets from a moving train's roof) while the megawatt sends off thumping, rapid-fire volleys of crackling bosh (which is good for just about everything else, except not killing civilians).

But there are other powers which are unique and game-changingly inventive, such as the ability to grind along train tracks and electrical cables slung between buildings (with a satisfying,

Like this? Play these



GTA IV
The daddy of the three-island, expanding-world epic, and an incredible story to boot. It's like inFamous but darker and more realistic.
VERDICT 10



Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
A brilliant, old-fashioned adventure. Like inFamous it expands a classic platforming template into a big, fat grown-up classic.
VERDICT 9



✓ Cole is one of the most fun-to-play-as heroes on PS3, but he's also got the blandest face/hair

subway train fizz) and, later, to glide with static thrusters, which enable you to slow and guide your aerial descent with charged, outstretched arms. With electricity cables knitting the city together, and a circular rail track on each island, these powers combine to totally revolutionise the way you move through the world. Crackle-sliding from roof to roof, launching yourself into the air then gliding to the next cable or rail. It's superpowered free-running – all about conservation of speed and momentum. The rush of freedom is felt most in the handful of missions where you're forced to move across the city at



✓ Shockwave is maybe the most satisfying power to use, especially on rooftops. Byeaaa!

speed, like racing against a helicopter to protect an undercover agent, or tracking the secret movement of the mysterious, blast-triggering Ray Sphere

✓ Running alongside this structure of mission/map/power expansion is a more visible hook of good and evil powers. From the off you have a bar in the top left of the screen measuring your positive or negative karma. You decide your allegiance simply by acting good or bad, most obviously during moral forks in the road (when Cole will weigh up two actions with differing consequences) or by choosing to complete either evil or heroic side missions (good missions

Influences How inFamous mixes superheroes and open cities



Watchmen



Heroes



Grand Theft Auto



Force lightning



San Francisco

Split-Screen Good and evil ways to rescue hostages



"Will you become a glowing saviour or an ashen-faced monster firing bolts of evil?"

are locked out when you complete evil ones, and vice-versa), but also when you're out in the world. Will you heal that pedestrian, or drain his life to recharge yourself? Carefully precision-shoot your target, or carpet bomb the street, torching cars and bystanders? Trick question – you'll do both, for a laugh. But afterwards, a decision needs to be made. Your choice affects the details of your story (the overall arc is the same, but shaded differently), your appearance, (turning you into either a glowing saviour bursting with blue energy, or an ashen-faced monster firing bolts of red evil), and how pedestrians react to you (either clapping and taking snaps or booing and throwing rocks).

It also determines which upgrades are available for your powers. These are bought with XP – every mission, kill and flashy move (head shock, sticky bomb hit etc) scores you points, and different upgrade paths exist for heroes and villains. You're unlikely to make your good/evil choice based on the fact that being bad gives you kick-ass level-three grenades which break into five pieces on impact, but it does give welcome depth if, as the game's structure practically demands, you play the game twice. (For the record, I enjoyed being



► The game's big moments are lit up by a strong strings-and-all score, featuring Amon Tobin.

087

good best – killing screaming women to bump up your bad karma gets sad pretty fast.)

Hall of infamy

The two paths come together at the close of what is a tight, revelatory story. In a way *inFamous* does for comic books what *Uncharted* did for matinee adventures – it plays with the form and conventions and translates them into a brilliantly playable and accomplished PS3 exclusive. It's basically a big win, moreish and addictive with a 'one more mission, one more power' appeal that saw me complete the game twice over a four day weekend full of ruined bedtimes. The combat's deep and spectacular, the climbing is slick and intuitive, and the story's got enough depth behind the flashy hero/villain hook to fully merit that all-important second playthrough. There's genuinely nothing else like *inFamous* on PS3, and it slots in very nicely alongside the machine's other big-name exclusives. People, we have another must-buy.

Nathan Ditum

PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

9



Bok-buster



UFC 2009 Undisputed

Sweep the leg! Then snap the leg, as MMA explodes onto PS3



Info

Format PS3 ETA 15 May Pub THQ Dev Yuke's Players 1-2 Web ufcundisputed.com It's like Really being in a fight, only being much, much better at it than you were at school.

The commentary in Undisputed is probably the best in the history of videogames. Spliced together from hours of audio files from genuine UFC events and original banter recorded by the announcers, it ranges from efficient description – 'Beautiful left hook!' – to interesting anecdotes – 'Not many people know that Wanderlei Silva trains wearing a snorkel' – and brilliantly, breathtaking enthusiasm – 'Unbelievable fight!' Best of all, it *notices* things. If you're scoring takedown after takedown, it'll point that out. If one fighter's rocked as the horn sounds the end of the round, Joe Rogan goes nuts. And if, say, Quinton

'Rampage' Jackson gets caught in a Muay Thai clinch – which is a pretty specific move and doesn't happen very often – both announcers will wax lyrical about how he doesn't like that position because it's how he once nearly got his face kneed clean off by Shogun Rua. Over the space of one weekend in my house, three different people thought UFC 2009 Undisputed was real fighting on the telly. It's *that* good.

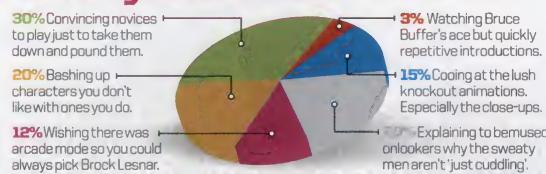
This is important for two reasons: firstly, Smackdown – the other THQ/Yuke's fighting collaboration – has some of the worst commentary of all time, so the fact that it's better than that should instantly dismiss fears that the two games have any damning similarities. Secondly, and more importantly, commentary's infamously difficult to get right at the best of times – look at PES – so the fact that UFC's is so good tells you a lot about the ambition and quality of the game as a whole. Of course, UFC has one key advantage over WWE: the fighting's real.

Instead of trying to convert a pantomime fight into a real competition, Undisputed has the clear-cut – but still quite difficult – task of letting you participate in almost-anything-goes bouts that can either end in seconds or go on for 25 minutes. But it also has to deal with complex fights in which contestants have dozens of moves to choose from, most of which casual onlookers won't even understand. It pulls both off brilliantly.

Punch out

Hitting first. Stand up fighting works a bit like Fight Night without the stick twirling: the four buttons trigger punches and kicks, with shoulder buttons modifying your strikes so they're harder or aimed at the body. Shots change automatically depending on what range you're at, so the same button combination might do a flying knee from a distance or a short elbow up close. Quick strikes and body shots won't ever knock anyone clean out, although jabs will disrupt more

What you do in... UFC 2009





WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
REVIEW
PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

PlayStation
089

A question of style

You get to pick two styles – one grappling, one striking – when you create a fighter. Here's our guide...



MUAY THAI

This makes you good with low kicks and elbows, letting you deliver devastating knees to the face. Typical fighter: Cheick Kongo.



BOXING

This gives you great hand speed, footwork and vicious KO power, but limits your kicking options. Typical fighter: Quinton Jackson.



KICKBOXING

Ideal for high kicks and for trying flashy moves like the spinning backfist. Not great for close work. Typical fighter: Rashad Evans.



BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU

Enables a range of submissions and makes you good on your back. Not good for takedowns from clinches. Typical fighter: Joe Stevenson.



WRESTLING

Good for takedowns and pounding people. It also lets you stand up to avoid submissions. Typical fighter: Dan Henderson.



telegraphed attacks and a good kick in the ribs can send a man to the mat. The magic of the game, though, is simple: how much damage a blow does is totally dependent on where your opponent is. Nail them with a lunging hook while they're stationary and they might not even wobble, but hit them with the same punch when they've dropped their lead hand to throw a kick and it could well topple them. You might knock them to their back, or daze them, or leave them crumpled on the floor but still just conscious enough that the ref doesn't step in – or spark them out clean. It all depends on their chin, and what's going on, and maybe a little bit of luck. There's no health bar displayed – you can switch the stamina one on, but that only shows how puffed out you are – but crucially the knockouts feel as if they happen at the right time. And yeah, you can get a KO in seven seconds (the real-life UFC record) but it's really, really rare. Again, spot on.

Grappling is tougher to explain. The wrestling bit is easiest to grasp – you hold **△**, prod the stick forward, and either dive for their legs (potentially a waste of stamina unless you've timed it right) or hug them in a clinch and try to trip them over. For the uninitiated, being on the bottom isn't a terrible thing in a UFC fight – as long as you've got your legs wrapped around your opponent (guard) as



Some fighters are more formidable on the deck, others are better on their feet.



opposed to them sitting on your chest (mount). In game terms, this translates into right stick-twirls. A quarter-circle will go for a simple move that will improve your situation slightly – from mount to guard, say – while a half-circle will do something more drastic, like getting you up off the floor so you can go back to punching each other. The man on the top is also trying to improve his position, and either of you can block the other's moves simply by holding the stick in one direction or (much more difficult) reverse them by flicking it when you see a move coming. Finally, there are submissions – usually activated by clicking the stick – which you can either patiently set up, or snatch when someone telegraphs a punch enough to let you grab their arm. A minor criticism here: although UFC's knockouts can happen in seconds, you have to struggle

Influences The games that have made UFC strong...



Fight Night Round 3



Def Jam: FFNY



Smackdown vs Raw



Facebreaker



Skate

The first five hours in... UFC 2009 Undisputed



01.00 hours



02.00 hours



03.00 hours



04.00 hours



05.00 hours

Getting to grips

Spend the first hour beating up BJ Penn with George St-Pierre. The AI on Exhibition mode is pleasingly easy to beat. On Career mode? Less so.

Look away now...

Decide to simulate the upcoming Bisping/Henderson. Result? 7-4 to Bisping, suggesting that he'll win if he can stay at range and keep jabbing.

Recreationism

Have a go at Classic Fight mode. We're supposed to rear naked choke Joe Stephenson in round two, and fail by inadvertently strangling him. Boooo.

Pride comes...

Have a go at career mode. Rack up six wins against C-class opposition, then get cocky and accept a shot against Kenny Florian – who mauls me.

Brock tactics

Convince a mate to try out UFC's submission mode by taking on ham-fisted heavyweight champ Brock Lesnar. Knockout physics? Convincing.



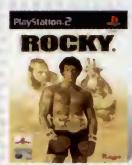
for every single submission, no matter how knackered your opponent is or how much you've caught him by surprise.

Smell the glove

So what's with the enormous score? Well, the joy of UFC is how absolutely, intuitively right everything about it feels. Go for a really hard roundhouse kick, and you'll appreciate the meaty whack that differentiates it from a little slapping shot. Catch an opponent with a takedown as they throw a punch, and you'll marvel at how much easier it is to take them down. And you will discover things as you go along, suddenly become keyed in to minor details that a worse fighter might fail to capitalise on. You'll spot, for instance, that Kenny Florian is vicious in the clinch, so the key is to use your stepping jab and make sure he never quite gets in range for it. Fights become beautiful, tactical wars: BJ Penn's lethal on his feet but tires quickly, so the trick is to avoid his kicks and take him down when he's too tired to stop you, keep him from using his Jiu-Jitsu by hitting him with punches on the floor, then knock him out after he's worn down. Career mode title fights feel important. Much

You can choose a gumshield design, but you'll only see it when things go very wrong.

Like this? Play these



Rocky

The Italian Stallion has more nuanced striking than UFC, and facial physics are spot on.

VERDICT 7



Def Jam Fight For NY

A minor PS2 classic full of armbars and chokeholds, which also lets you throw Snoop Dogg through the windscreens of his own Hummer.

VERDICT 8

tougher than the easy three-rounders you tackle at the start of the game, they demand constant concentration and a well-executed gameplan. Does this make it inaccessible to newcomers? Not any more than Madden, Tony Hawk's or Street Fighter – all games that open up as you play them more. There's nothing to stop you having a gentleman's agreement to simply slug it out to begin

"This is a great example of how sports games should be done."

with, and there's no reason a beginner can't land a lucky shot. Conversely, the veteran player can always keep things interesting by finishing with a bang, going for a jumping knee or flying armbar.

And for real UFC devotees? That score's honestly more like a ten. If you don't understand how exciting it is to have Greg Jackson murmuring advice in your corner between rounds, think about what PES would be like if Wenger gave team talks at half time. If you can't

comprehend why it's so impressive to have Eddie Bravo and Saulo Ribeiro teaching you new moves – in one of the best career training modes ever, by the way – imagine Cantona coaching you on free kicks. The fighters look flawless, the TV-style presentation is immaculate and the roster is vast – stretching from well-known fighters to ones that even long-term fans will barely recognise.

In fact, the one problem is that there isn't enough opportunity to use famous names – career mode only allows you to use your created fighters, so you can only play as real-world favourites in one-shot Exhibition matches or the versus mode.

That aside, it's just a great example of how sports games should be done – both as a simulation that teases ever greater skill from all comers, and as a service to fans. And the commentary? Bloody brilliant. **Joel Snape**



What the monster trucks lack in looks they make up for in stability and presence.



WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Petrol paradise

Fuel

Size matters when you go off-road

Forget everything you know about carburettors. (Didn't take long, did it?) This is a racing game for people who don't sleep with a Haynes manual under their pillow, and it turns out that you can have more fun with a filthy track, a tornado and a monster truck than you ever could with a waxed Ferrari F40.

So it's finally happened: years of leaving the bathroom light on has caused a climate catastrophe. Civilisation is destroyed, the only currency is fuel, and the way to earn it is by racing across the weather-ravaged landscape. It's as good an excuse as any for races that take place across the glass walkway of a Grand

Canyon-style abyss, or through cities buried by sand dunes. There are over 5,000 square miles of terrain for you to blast across, and surprisingly, rather than feeling like an empty expanse, it's packed with challenges, races and hit-the-brakes sights to see.

Still, it's a big old world, and at first it feels intimidating, but there are heliports dotted around to make travelling around the map quicker, an optional GPS system and so much variety in the garage that it's hard to get bored. There are around 70 vehicles including quads, bikes, muscle cars, buggies, SUVs and, spectacularly, a hovercraft, on offer.

You haven't gone properly off road until you've sped across Dead Lady's Lake on a cushion of air, laughing in the face of friction. You buy new vehicles with the fuel you earn from wins, and tart them up with different paint jobs and liveries. And that's as far as customisation goes – a relief for anyone who cares more about speed than spoiler angles, but a



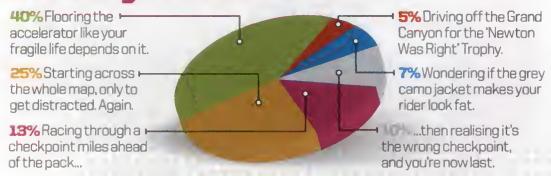
Stupid F1 has to stop for big downpours, but in Fuel racing through tornados is part of the fun.

downside for tweaking zealots. Just be aware when you're blowing your unleaded on a new ride that some races require specific vehicles, so you need to shop semi-strategically.

Road trip

The challenges and career events are mainly races, but there are a couple of different contests that make a change from caning it between point A and point B. Anyone with high blood pressure should stay away from the Speed Run challenges in which you whiz from one

What you do in... Fuel





▲ Get enough air and your rider will pull some fancy moves. What does it win you? Just kudos.



▲ In Fuel's climate-ravaged future quad bikes aren't just for teenagers with rich parents.



▲ The giant red GPS arrows will always show you the most direct way to the next checkpoint.

checkpoint to the next with a miserly three or four seconds to spare each time. Then there are the Chopper Chases where you race against a whirlybird over open ground, trying to judge the best route while keeping your eyes on the sky. The best non-race event by far, though, is Seek And Destroy where you try to barge your opponent off the track. And it's made all the more enjoyable by a sweetly balanced difficulty level. Even in the shorter races a bad start doesn't guarantee a humiliating fail as there always seems to be the chance to narrow the gap and power through for a last-gasp victory.

As you win races and challenges you earn stars, which in turn unlock new sections of the map. The trouble here is that, early on, some of the racing feels dangerously close to MMO-style grinding, racing bargain bucket vehicles in the same competitions to build up stars and earn fuel. As mentioned, some races can only be completed with specific cars, and they're not cheap, so you're obliged to Groundhog Day through some events at different difficulty levels, which makes your first few hours in the game more of a slog than it should be. There's the largest game world on PS3 out there, so when you're trapped in one tiny corner



▲ Each section of the map has its own base camp – this is the sandy coast of Tsunami Reef.



▲ You can tell this is a make believe world – airport approach roads are never this quiet.

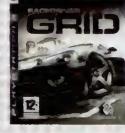
093

Like this?
Play these



Pure
It's all quad bikes, all the time – with an extra boost of speed every time you pull off a trick.

VERDICT 8



Race Driver Grid
Another fine racer from Codemasters that perfectly rides the red line between authenticity and thrills. Like Gran Turismo, but fun.

VERDICT 9

"Tornados throw trucks into your path: suddenly you're a stunt driver."

of it on a battered old quad bike, it's an exercise in frustration. As such, it's only when you start to get your hands on the more powerful vehicles that Fuel really starts to get interesting.

Looks like rain

It's the British way to want to talk endlessly about the weather, but in Fuel it really is worth mentioning. When you're in free roam it's dynamic (just like the game's day/night cycle) and its effects are brilliantly exploited in the career races. In the Riders Of The Storm mission, for example, you might see lightning striking a pylon that crashes onto the track, forcing you to make a panicked detour to keep in the running. It gets more extreme still when you race around a mountain track with a tornado passing by. The wind throws huge trucks straight into your path, and suddenly you're a stunt driver.

And while the shift from day to night may not be as exciting, it can be just as visually dramatic. Word of warning kids – do not try riding a motorbike at full pelt through a forest at night.

And what could make this package of climate change, fuel and scenic vistas even better? Being beaten at it by children on the internet! Fuel offers a 16-player multiplayer mode, with all the races and challenges from the single-player game also available online. There's even a flexible race editor for you to create bespoke events. Solid stuff, and we'll be testing it fully soon.

So you can keep your super serious racers with their parts bins, gear ratios and manicured race tracks;

I'll be playing Fuel with its tornados, hovercraft and XXL off-roading. If this is what catastrophic climate change feels like, I'm never turning the plasma TV off again.

Rachel Penny





Serial shredder

Guitar Hero Metallica

Hang your heads Aerosmith, this is how it's done

094

I cannot live! I cannot die! Trapped in myself! Body my holding cell!" Seriously, other than that Napster guy, who *doesn't* like Metallica? Not you, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this. So there's an obvious pre-requisite requirement to your enjoyment of *Guitar Hero Metallica*, but fan service aside this is one of the best *Guitar Hero*s yet.

This is what *GH* Aerosmith *should* have been – a testament to the band's fans (not a stingy cash-in). It's the same setup in terms of menus, unlocking setlists, character/band creation etc, but the detail and love that's gone into making the game throws 'yellow bottles' at Aerosmith's stage. Along with fully mo-capped James, Kirk, Lars and Robert, you get a classic collection of their songs plus the songs/bands that have influenced them, loads of bonus footage, bootleg treats and featurettes, plus some of the most challenging and frankly exhausting *GH* riffola yet.

The big tracks are all here. Master Of

Like this?
Play these

Guitar Hero World Tour
Return to form from the disappointing *Legends Of Rock*, this blows the competition off stage.

VERDICT 9

White
Shaun White Snowboarding
Okay, the game's not very good, but if you like the heavy stuff, the tracklist tips the scales.

VERDICT 5

Puppets, Dyers Eve, One, Fade To Black, Whiplash, For Whom The Bell Tolls – honestly, there's barely a dud in sight. Then there's featured artists including Slayer, Alice In Chains, Kyuss, System Of A Down... if you're into this stuff the track list is like a letter to Metal Santa. And it's all brutal. SingStar Abba this is not.

Ride the lightning

The gameplay is also spot on. It's fluid, exciting – you really *feel* like you're playing the songs due to some carefully crafted note mapping (something *GH* lost in previous games). As for the drums, you'll be arguing over who gets to play them. Drummer or not (and this sounds cheesy) but you'll become Lars Ulrich – like you're right there in the snake pit playing along for real. And you get to plug in an extra drum pedal for that authentic double bass drum action. Again, its success is down to properly thought out note (stick?) mapping, but you can't help but feel the band's presence in the attention to detail.

From the recreation of the stage sets (if you've seen the band on pretty much all of their tours since the late '80s you'll recognise every one of them), to the band's infamous The Good, The Bad And The Ugly intro



▲ Virtual James Hetfield seemingly goes to the gym twice as much as his real life counterpart.



▲ The double bass drum option is excellent, for anyone who can actually manage to keep up.



Info

Format PS3 ETA 31 May Pub Activision Dev Neversoft Players 1-4 Web metallica.guitarhero.com It's like Being in Metallica. Minus the enormous salary.

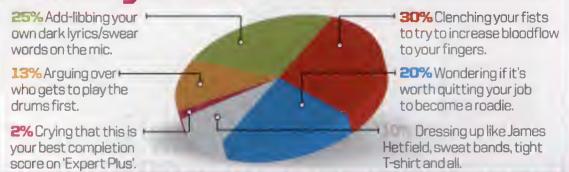
song, to the original Bob Seger version of Turn The Page (despite the fact the saxophone sucks), to Robert Trujillo's mo-capped 'windmill spin', to just the way the whole damn thing plays, Metallica does not disappoint. But be warned, it's not only heavy, it's hard. It's in the later levels that the game comes to life and it's absolutely worth putting the effort in, but it'll take some serious work, stamina, and dedication to get the most from what's on offer. The archive of unlockables is impressive, but here's a tip: avoid the freaky, creepy, *wrong* footage of the Metallica mega-fans' visit to Neversoft's studios – it's just weird.

Bored of the *Guitar Hero* scene? Thought the first game was good, then it all got a bit 'whatever, man'? Try this. It may well bring back that initial first date buzz.

Yes, yes, you've got to like Metallica, but Expert Plus! Plus? Try it. It'll make you sick on yourself. In a rock way.

Helen Woodey

What you do in... GH Metallica



PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

8



Daily grind

Phantasy Star Portable

They're *not* lightsabers, they're laser swords

There's only one way to know for sure if this JRPG is for you. Ask yourself: how much do you care about fictional weaponry? Unless your immediate response is to scoff and say 'Well, that depends on the dps and rarity of the weapon,' stay away. Because while this full-on fantasy adventure might seem to be about fighting off monsters to save the universe, it's actually about grinding for hours to build the bestest character with the bestest laser sword ever.

Party time

Nowhere is this more obvious than when you're battling, because whether it's anonymous robot number 147 or a giant fire-breathing De Ragan (which is a dragon, only said slowly), the action never changes. Slash, shoot, dodge, heal, slash. Forget about getting any help from your AI teammates (you can take three on any mission) because they'll mainly just get in the way, mysteriously refusing to use their health potions and getting stuck on scenery. There is a satisfaction to slaying every last monster and smashing up every box in your quest for items, but it's basically the only reason you'll keep struggling through the repetitive combat.

Even the well-thought-out menus, like a quick-access palette with all your items, weapons and Photon Arts special moves can't help the pace



► The cut-scenes only serve to give your thumbs a break from the endless combat.



► The plot is full of you-go-girl beast women and wide-eyed, emotion-learning robots.

when your allies are such dimwits. Of course, you can fill the three party slots with real people thanks to an ad hoc mode for up to four players, but they'll need to be free and easy with their time if you're going to make any real progress through the compulsory story missions, never mind the optional side quests.

Those with an insatiable lust for items should start making friends with the unemployed and housebound now.

Rachel Penny



Straight to bargain bin

With **Nathan Ditum**



"JUST SHUT YOUR STUPID LITTLE FACE, DIEGO, OR I SWEAR BY THE DARK ONE I WILL END YOU", I find myself saying after just ten minutes with Nickelodeon's miniature eco-warrior in **Go Diego Go: Great Dinosaur Adventure**. The title's a lie for two obvious reasons: Diego's piercingly idiotic delivery ("I-can-climb-UP!") immediately sinks the idea of it being great, and no game in which single button presses trigger lengthy bits of on-rails

movement can ever be described as an adventure. It's barely interactive at all – the stupid thing basically plays itself while occasionally screaming at you, and every now and then a weird inventory screen flashes up featuring a backpack with a face, which every survival instinct in my aging body shrieked at me to beat to death.

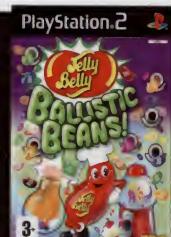
We reviewed an import copy of **Millennium Series Championship Paintball 2009** on PS3 a few months back, but now it's over here, on PS2, and worse than ever. The concept is crooked. To my mind, paintballing and first-person shooters exist for the same reason – because actually shooting people, though appealing in a base and dangerous way, is at best a big commitment (joining the army), at worst very illegal, and either way usually comes at the cost of other people shooting back. Bottom line, paintballing and FPS gaming are both pretend shooting, and putting them together is deliberately placing yourself at an extra remove from the thing itself. It's like playing a hook-a-duck Flash game to experience the thrill of hunting, or having a gentleman's rest wearing boxing gloves and standing slightly too far away from your monitor. Probably.



I'm going to make a leaflet for all the people considering buying **Samurai Shodown Anthology**, printed in big, warm letters on unthreatening paper. It'll say: "Dear idiots, before wasting your money on a collection of fighting games which have been re-released by SNK on every platform since the horse-drawn Neo-Geo, you should consider these facts. 1) There are six games here, of which five are not only totally *rubbish*, but rendered obsolete by the latest, *Samurai Shodown VI*. 2) *Samurai Shodown VI* is *rubbish* too. 3) The £20-odd quid this would probably cost if you can find anywhere that sells it would be better spent on falling over and getting a taxi to A&E. Love Nath."

Abomination of the month

I'm having trouble working up the energy to say anything about **Jelly Belly: Ballistic Beans**. If they were real jelly beans I'd neither want to swallow the garish sods nor muster the effort to spit them out. They're in my mouth, obviously. In the analogy, I don't know how they got there. Anyway, why make a licensed game about a brand of sweets? It's got to be either because you want to raise brand awareness and sell more sweets (and my nausea says you've failed), or because this is the only way you could raise the cash to make the game you've always dreamed about. The one with the coloured beans fired from a cannon into a weird vertical space of targets and bonuses, like idiot pinball. In which case – *well done*.





Head
to
head



Major League Baseball 2K9

VS

Pro Baseball Spirits 5

It's USA vs Japan on the PS3 baseball field

Take Two's annual attempt at baseball has every MLB and AAA team, and a dribble of new features, most of which appeared in rival series MLB: The Show a year or two ago. Oops.



Best innovation is the ability to pitch using the right stick – rock back and forth for a fastball, move in an arc for a curveball, etc. It's a fun gimmick, but the home-run-heavy results stifle any realism.



Visually it's fine, although the crowd seems disjointed from the play. New commentator Gary Thorne does a top job of tracking the action, but you never get the sense of a real TV broadcast.



With rosters that automatically update when you go online, a giant Franchise mode and Home Run Derby, there's plenty here. On paper. In reality, the action's so dull you'll be done in a month.



The baseball Pro Evo, developed by Konami and justifiably revered in Japan. There's only 14 teams, but the nine modes include Stardom, where you guide a player to glory over 20 years.

Don't fear the Japanese text – follow the onscreen prompts to pitch, and to bat you just move an outline of your bat around the strike zone to match the path of the ball, then hit \times . Great stuff.

You won't understand the commentary, but the polite foreign chatter is strangely calming. And the players and stadia look ace. Why can't we have these visuals in PES?

Vast if you dig out an English FAQ (try operationsports.com). Pennant Race (PBS5's season mode) is moreish once you recognise players by face, even if you've no idea of their names.

LOSER

Can't decide whether it wants to offer Wii-style interaction or MLB: The Show-calibre depth, and so does neither particularly well. Buy MLB 09 instead. Now.



VERDICT

WINNER

A great-looking and fun baseball effort that successfully transcends the language barrier using simple gameplay mechanics. Japan wins.





Inverte-great

Worms

Legless, destructive and still stupidly fun

On its US release, some of the online reviews across the pond rated Worms harshly because of its 'limited single-player options'. Those reviewers are clueless idiots. Not because they've made a factual mistake regarding solo play – all that's on offer in that department are 20 challenges that earn you a bronze Trophy when you complete them. They're idiots for missing the point entirely. Because Worms isn't about solo play. It never was, and never will be.

Laugh in slaughter

Those who revelled in Holy Hand Grenading their mates while sinking deeper into the sofa during a marathon session in the '90s know that Worms is *only* about multiplayer. Here it's available both on and offline, for up to four players, and it's as good as it ever was. In fact, more so thanks to the sharp HD makeover of its cartoony 2D visuals. You control a team of four worms and must do your utmost to keep them alive while picking off your opponent's worms using outrageously violent weapons. You've one move per turn, and 60 seconds in which to make it. It's tactical. It's exciting. It's funny. It's absolutely brilliant.

Super-sheeping your wife (it's a flying exploding sheep) and cementing victory when down to your final worm is a euphoric experience. Shotgunning a random, American worm



Info

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Sony Dev Team 17 Players 1-4 Web worms.team17.com It's like You're Kim Jong-il and your garden is South Korea.



If you've never killed a worm with an exploding sheep then you haven't lived, man.



The weapons at your disposal are brilliant, favouring massive overkill almost every time.

over the net, so that they swear in a high-pitched Texan drawl, is a moment of existential triumph. You win, you celebrate, you gloat. Or: you lose, restart, blow one of your own worms to bits, then laugh, shout, swear and declare this one of the

greatest games on PSN. It may be 15 years old, but this easily holds its own against Pain, Crash Commandos and the rest. Look, it's £7.99. Just buy it. **Ben Wilson**



PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

Super Furry Animals Dark Days/Light Years

Format Album ETA Now Price £7.99

Welsh psychedelic pop wizards get their groove on, forsaking sleepy country balladry in favour of mad riffs. While great, it's not stuffed with hits. Still, worth it alone for Inaugural Trams in which Franz Ferdinand's Nick McCarthy raps. In German. myspace.com/superfurryanimals



The Horrors Sea Within A Sea

Format Track ETA Out now Price Free

Funereal goth-rockers known for larking around with Peaches Geldof and other equally despicable activities kick start a fine new direction with a new track, produced by Portishead's Geoff Barrow. And it's free if you give your soul – oh, okay, email address – to The Horrors' mailing list. myspace.com/thehorrors

PlayStation 097



Asher Roth I Love Collage

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

The biggest rising star of US hip hop is a preppy white kid who raps about frat-house parties, dropping science like "Time isn't wasted/When you're getting wasted". Not quite Public Enemy, then, but Roth has the hooks – and, maybe, good looks – to be the biggest white rapper since Eminem. myspace.com/asherroth



Download of the month Kap Bambino Blacklist

Format Album ETA 18 May Price £7.99

If you liked Crystal Castles, with their shrieking harpy frontwoman and Mario-gone-evil electronics, you'll get a buzz from Kap Bambino's debut. 12 tracks of electro-punk built out of jackboot beats, buzzing keyboards, and screech-along choruses. myspace.com/kapbambino

It's part deadly special move, part interpretive dance performance.



Mutagenic madness

X-Men Origins Wolverine Uncaged Edition

The first cut is the deepest, but it's the fortieth one that really hurts

Oh third-person brawler, least loved of all the gaming genres, yet most-used for movie tie-ins. For once, the film actually fits. Wolverine has razor claws and an explanation for his recharging health. The chance to explore how he became the adamantium-coated Weapon X also gives a strong setup. And yet this is all wrong. It's ugly enough to make children cry, and playing is a familiar slog through light-heavy, light-heavy attacks, with only the odd peek at Wolverine's innards to cheer things up.

Combat is a series of gory combos and lock-on lunges that send you instantly hurtling towards the enemy. For every kill you get experience points which lead to more health and upgrades for your claws and special moves. Collectible mutagen tokens give you equipable abilities – extra health, say, or blood rage



to make you stronger the closer you are to death – which you shuffle in and out of a limited number of slots. Even if the idea of juggling skill points and powers sounds as much fun as hitting your toes with a hammer, it's in your interest to do so. Most enemies are just giant blood sacks with guns, so if you want to enjoy the slaughter at all you're best off unlocking as many new moves as possible, just to keep things semi-fresh.

Repetitive strain

Grunt enemies fall into two categories, gunmen or acrobatic sword swingers, and feel the same whether they're in special forces uniforms or jungle fatigues. There's even less imagination to the bosses. If you're in Africa (the bits that follow Logan's early work for the military) you'll have repeat showdowns with the stony cliché that is the Leviathan, a rocky golem with lava for blood. In the snowy wastes of the facility (the bit that shows Wolverine's genesis) your biggest foe will be the Wendigo, a giant mutated monster. Both have big weak points on



Luckily machete man is happy to wait his turn while you disembowel his buddy.



He might sport a dashing pair of sideburns but Wolverine has no idea how to treat the ladies.

their back (surprise!) and defeating them is just a case of dodging their attacks then going crazy with your claws. Not only do you fight both multiple times, but you fight them in pretty much the same way. It's a double disappointment.

In a misguided attempt to give you something to do other than julienne enemies (which is surely the *whole point* of being Wolverine) you have to do a lot of turning cranks and heaving around batteries. Swanning through the jungle looking for cogs is the job of busty lady archaeologists, not a metal-skeletoned killing machine. It's like sending a tank to do the shopping. The puzzles aren't even challenging. They're just there.

Then there's the visual sadness, which includes duff lighting, awkward cameras, and the stuttering Zoetrope-style framerate. And that's your lot: a distinctly average combo-tie-in-mash-up,

the only perk of which is getting the odd flash of spinal cord when Wolverine gets hurt – a thrill you can replicate easily by rifling through your Friday night kebab.

Rachel Penny

What you do in... X-Men





The single-player campaign is like a big tutorial for the in-game editor.

Farmyard frolics

Flock

Sheep worrier has control issues

The aim of this PSN puzzler is best described by its in-game help: "Use your UFO to herd animals into the Motherflocker." Which also sums up its cute sense of humour. In Flock you tear around levels listening to bleating animals and the tinkle of points combining and multiplying as you (hopefully) rack up high scores by herding sheep, cows, pigs and chickens into your alien mothership.

Shrinking sheep

Each level is essentially a puzzle in which you steer your UFO's beam to herd animals through a variety of different obstacles, from one-way ramps, to hazardous cliffs, to catapults and geysers. And, of course, each animal reacts to the scenery a little bit differently. So bulls can smash through fences, while sheep need to be shrunk in water until they're small enough to scuttle under them.

But Flock is beset by a single, significant flaw. You know that bit in games where your character gets stuck on the scenery? Annoying, isn't it? Well that's the problem with Flock. They've basically taken that bit and built a game around it, and the result is frustrating – it's hard to enjoy the oodles of fiendish puzzles because it feels like you're fighting the controls rather than conquering conundrums.



Endless user-made levels would be super exciting if the game wasn't so frustrating.

It does have a certain charm and wit and humour, and a comprehensive level editor, and (if you've got a second controller) multiplayer – which is a lot more than can be said for a lot of games that are five or even ten times the price of Flock. But really, that's not enough to overcome the basic problem with the actual design of the game: it's funny, but it's not quite fun.

David McCarthy



BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



Role Models

Director David Wain Starring Sean William Scott, Paul Rudd ETA Out now

Cracking comedy following the pain of an energy drink salesmen forced to look after two teenagers when Danny (Rudd) gets drunk and picks up a community service sentence. Christopher 'McLovin' Mintz-Plasse elicits sniggers as a LARP outcast, but it's potty-mouthed newcomer Bobb'e J Thompson's super-offensive put-downs that steal the show.



Australia

Director Baz Luhrmann Starring Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman ETA Out now

Big, wobbly, weepy epic. *Really* big – from Jackman's preposterous balloon pecs to the dusky matte painting horizons that give the film its unreal melodramatic feel. It's long, and splashes emotion around like a bucket of tears, but it's lovely in a boring, old-fashioned way.



Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa

Director Eric Darnell, Tom McGrath Starring Ben Stiller, Chris Rock ETA Out now

The best things in the first, still-not-as-good-as-Pixar, film weren't the squawkily stereotyped main characters but the penguins, monkeys and Sacha Baron Cohen's lemur king, Julian. And the sequel knows it, giving almost equal weight to its sidekicks as its stuffable main cast.



Movie of the month

The X-Men Trilogy

Director Bryan Singer, Brett Ratner Starring Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart ETA Out now

All three X-Men films in a box. The first, from Usual Suspects director Singer, never really gets moving but sets up X-Men 2, which is probably the best superhero movie of the last decade except The Dark Knight. Brett Ratner took over for number three. It shows.

☒ Nate seems like the guy who sleeps with your girlfriend on the beach then says 'hey, be cool man.'



100

Cyborg silliness

Bionic Commando

Is this one-armed bandit worth your coins?

Back in 1987, Bionic Commando was a pretty standard action-platform game that Americans inexplicably loved. 22 years of cultural and technological progress later and it's been reborn on PS3... as a pretty standard action-platform game which, presumably, Americans will also love. Part sequel, part remake, it stars

Nathan Spencer, a badass amputee whose job it is to use his grapple-claw-equipped bionic arm to swing around a shattered future metropolis, shooting and smashing the crap out of anything wearing body armour.

On the other hand...

The game starts with Nathan's grizzly military veteran bosses taking the tactically imbecilic decision to deploy him and his big metal limb in separate dropships, forcing Nate to spend the first bit of the game using his one good arm to recover his other much better one. But once the game gets going, it's not so much armless as brainless. In fact, some of the time, the action is so brainless that it wanders across the idiot savant threshold into 'brilliant'. At these moments using your grappling claw to swoop around, dealing out armfuls of destruction, stomping and

Arm-o-Meter

How hard does Bionic Commando punch?



Info

Format PS3 ETA 22 May Pub Capcom Dev GRIN Players 1-10

Web bioniccommando.com

It's like if Doctor Octopus and Spider-Man had a child, somehow.

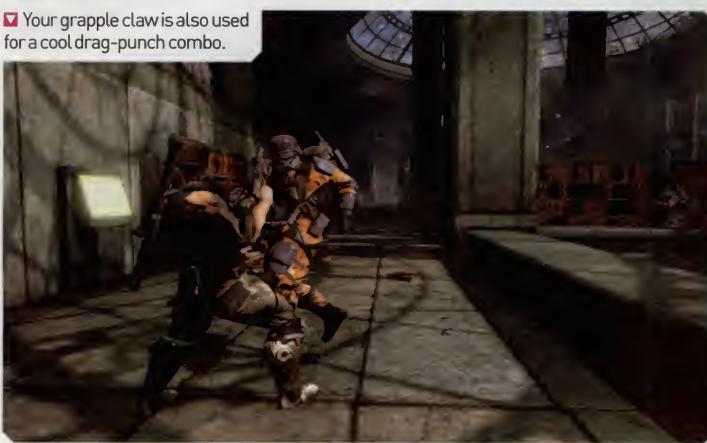
shooting things and people until they die is every bit as entertaining as it should be.

It looks great too, full of beautifully bombed-out waterlogged cityscapes, subterranean caverns, and pretty green parks. But those attractive backdrops contain various environmental hazards that keep Nathan restricted to a fairly linear path. He can't swim, because his arm's too heavy (and the army boffins didn't think to give him bionic lungs, or a giant self-inflating water wing), and he can't stand the radiation that conveniently crimps the edges of the playing area. Even when he's operating in his comfort zone Nate has to deal with a succession of enemy grunts, robots that can only be

✓ The game promises much more freedom than it delivers.



✓ Your grapple claw is also used for a cool drag-punch combo.



killed by a blow to the back, jet fighters, hovercrafts etc. But it's okay, because even though his bionic limb is more than capable of causing hurt, he's also got a soft spot for more conventional military kit: grenade launchers, sniper rifles, rocket launchers – the usual.

There are other times, though, when the game's brainlessness begins to grate. Take the radioactive areas, for example. It's normally pretty clear where they are, because they glow, and because a big nuclear symbol flashes up when you go near them. Occasionally, however, you might find that you're swinging so well that you can reach an almost inaccessible nook or cranny – the sort of place that would be a perfect hiding place for a secret collectable. Only it doesn't contain a secret collectable – just enough radiation to kill you instantly and send you back to the last save point. Which brings us to another irritation, because a lot of those save points are poorly positioned. Worse still, as the game progresses, the method used to ramp up the difficulty level is largely to

space these ever further apart, which feels a bit cheap.

Armless fun

In the end though, Bionic Commando is so brainless that it's all just a bit boring. It's so linear: follow the waypoints, kill the baddies, hack into a terminal to read a wordy bit, and then repeat. It's also too easy just to muddle through the swinging sections by repeatedly, waywardly, sending out your bionic claw in any and every direction. The multiplayer maps promise a slightly deeper experience, stretching the game vertically and offering plenty of interesting spaces. We'll have a full online review soon, but even if it turns out to be amazing that will just make the super-dull solo campaign even more of a disappointment.

That said, as long as you're not expecting anything more complex than the ancient side-scroller that inspired it, Bionic Commando offers plenty of fun. But the fact remains that, on these shores at least, an adoring fanbase will likely remain out of reach. **David McCarthy**



Japan Watch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

Strikers 1945 Plus

Format PSP Pub Wiznet Subtitles No

It's a mercifully rare thing that this column attempts to make a point, but listen up – games like this hardcore WW2/R-Type side-scrolling shooter mash-up are what PSP should be all about. Stop sending it out to punch well above its graphical weight and champion aggressively addictive gameplay instead.



Mimana Iyar Chronicle

Format PSP Pub GungHo Subtitles No

Am I the only person concerned about how many minors are being toolled up with swords and sent on dangerous quests in RPGs like Mimana Iyar Chronicle? Article 32 of the Charter Of Fundamental Rights Of The European Union takes a dim view on this kind of thing.

101



Enkaku Sousa Sana e no 23 Hiai

Format PSP Pub Sony Subtitles No

Now this is more like it – an adventure in which you play a drunk no mark who stumbles upon a murder scene, gets mistaken for the murderer and locked up with only your ex (a solicitor) fighting your side. "Yeah, well maybe I was found holding a bloody knife, but you've got a fat ass. Uh, you're coming back, right?"

Exotic Boxart Of The Month



Your Memories Off: Girl's Style

We've all been there – that uncomfortable moment when you realise you're prettier than your girlfriend. Damn these perfect cheek bones.

Hyakko: Yorozuya Jikenbo!

A great example of inverse relationships in Japanese character design: the wider the eyes, the smaller the nose. See also: skirt length/unit sales.

Capcom Value Pack

Enjoy your layoff leisure hours with this – what appears to be Capcom's first foray into Sainsbury's Basics range-style zero-budget boxart design. Feel the quantity...

Mind games

Buzz! Brain Of The UK

Multiplayer magic... is the right answer!

I'm torn on this one. On the one hand, Buzz! going online last year opened up the potential for unlimited question packs, so wanging 25 quid on another disc that contains what's essentially the same game might seem crazy. On the other, it's got 4,000 new UK-centric questions and as soon as my insatiable sense of competitiveness had kicked in after two minutes of playing in the office, I was willing to christen it the best quiz game ever.

Tapping into that competitive spirit is the secret to Buzz's genius, coupled with a cunning structure that keeps things close right to the wire. Rounds like Point Stealer and Pie Fight guarantee that your household supernerd never quite accelerates away, and allowing the person in last place to choose the subject for each round is a clever touch. By the time you reach the brilliant, Going For Gold-inspired Final

Countdown round – where your points are converted to glowing bars holding up your character's podium, and wrong answers (and time!) remove bars until only one competitor is left standing – you've entered a delicate emotional state where both doom and glory are an impulsive button press away.

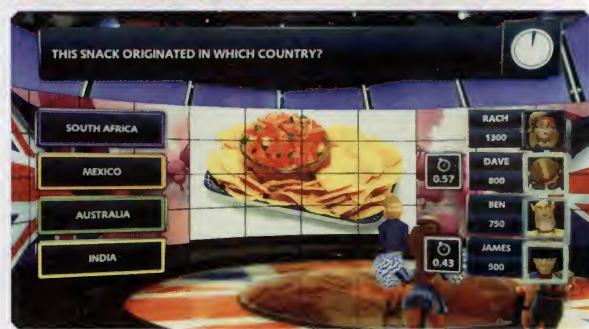
How to resolve that opening dilemma, though? Well, look at it this way: if you've never played a Buzz! game before then it's time you got involved, and this is an indisputable 9/10. If you bought Buzz! Quiz TV last year and aren't fussed about having Brain Of The UK's new questions then it's a 7/10. And while my Buzz! skillz aren't enough to beat brain-of-OPM Tim

or cheaty Rachel (thank heavens Nathan, The Universe's Most Competitive Man, is away), I do at least have sufficient mathematical prowess to tell you that averages out to an 8/10. **Ben Wilson**



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Sony Dev SCEE Players 1-4 Web buzzthegame.com It's like You no longer have to feel guilty about being cleverer than your mates.



OPM's Rach sneaks out in front, again... By cheating, again.

Penny arcane

Powerup Forever

Feels like it should be more fun than it actually is



Simplicity and repetition, done right, can be amazingly effective. Like the plinky keyboard outro to the Horrors album, or, more pertinently, a classic shoot-'em-up – but you need the perfect cocktail of speed and reward. Powerup definitely has the simplicity and repetition: every level follows the same basic structure: kill enough harmless parasites to attract the Guardian while fending off the constant barrage of less harmless creatures in the level. Then

Conveniently, this is a pretty accurate representation of the confusion going on inside our head.

kill the Guardian, get a power-up, and grow. Like PC game Spore's cell phase (which this game predates) – and PSN indie game Flow (which it doesn't) – the world changes its perspective as you expand. Existing enemies become less threatening; formidable hulks that were ignoring you suddenly become aggressive. It's a nice idea, executed well.

Speed limit

But about that speed and reward thing. Despite the fact that it's moderately fast at any given moment, in a larger sense, Powerup is too slow. Levels take too long, the difficulty curve is too gentle, new enemies are introduced too slowly. When you die, the idea of going through another 20-minute session to recover your lost progress is not appealing. An old school arcade game you don't want to play twice in one sitting? Something is wrong.



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Namco Bandai Dev Blitz Players 1 Web snipurl.com/anxmt It's like Bringing overdue books back to the library. Late fines? Really?

With nothing in-level to collect, tension comes from the multiplier timer. Finish the level before it expires and you gain a rank. Miss by a second and you lose a rank. But it's frustrating and unfair to be punished two ranks because you spent 15 seconds looking for a bloody parasite.

Powerup looks lovely, but it offers few thrills. The main emotions you'll feel while playing are duty and resentment: duty to the six quid you've spent, and to the time you've sunk. Duty to unlock the bonus modes. And resentment, because Powerup Forever feels like it should be ten times more fun. **Jon Blyth**



Tenchu: Shadow Assassins

Format PSP ETA Out now Pub Ubisoft

If you spend your days creeping about in PJs you're either Hugh Hefner or a ninja. Unfortunately this game is bunny-free, meaning you're sneaking around, avoiding lamps and squatting in shrubbery. Do it right and you get to throttle a bunch of identical guards and whichever corrupt warlord is your current target. It's painstaking but satisfying – more like a murderous logic puzzle than an action game. Yes, the enemy's eyesight ranges



from 'secret government laser' to 'Stevie Wonder', and the action has a nasty habit of freezing, but at least creeping everywhere so slowly means it'll last for ages. Right?

Rachel Penny



Silent Hill

Format PSN download/PSP ETA Out now Pub Konami

There's no escaping it: old games age like milk in a greenhouse. The original memories of Silent Hill's 1999 genre-defining psych-horror still raise a chill, so it's upsetting to discover it shuffling on to PS3 ten years later, like a wheezy old man trying to muster enough breath for one last "Boo!" The once terrifying, fog-shrouded world is now a Lego set full of lumpy monsters with a draw distance of inches and terrible controls. Playing it on PSP isn't much better because



crucial buttons are mapped unusably to the nub. The music and sound still manage to conjure up a little of the old atmosphere, but otherwise it's probably time to switch old grandpa scary's life support off. Leon Hurley



Trivial Pursuit

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub EA

The recipe for a good quiz videogame is simple: a range of questions presented in a varied fashion with an entertaining personality. Trivial Pursuit certainly has the questions, even if there are far too many basic multiple choices. It's the personality that's wrong. Trivial Pursuit wants you to feel good about yourself. It's a nauseating barrage of flattery, hand-wringing commiseration, and toothlessly apologetic joshing.

It's skin-crawlingly insipid chumminess, delivered in a castrated British voice that's



been bled of all personality and performance by some arcane ritual of committee approval and brand identity. Despite being a competent quiz, Trivial Pursuit is an

uncomfortable, basic affair that has no place asking £40 for the privilege of playing it. Jon Blyth



Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

UFC 2009 Undisputed



Bionic Commando



Damnation



Fuel



Guitar Hero Metallica

Infamous

Virtua Tennis 2009

Prototype



Red Faction Guerrilla

Batman Arkham Asylum

Ghostbusters

Fight Night Round 4

Guitar Hero Greatest Hits

Overlord II

Transformers: Rise Of The Fallen

Wolfenstein

Dark Void

Dissidia: Final Fantasy

I Am Alive

Ride To Hell

Singularity

Watchmen The End Is Nigh Ep 2

GI Joe The Rise Of Cobra

Madden NFL 10

Mini Ninjas

Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising

Rock Band: Beatles

FIFA 10

Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier

Just Cause 2

Need For Speed Shift

Brutal Legend

PES 2010

Uncharted: Among Thieves

Bioshock 2

Mafia II

Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time

Battlefield Bad Company 2

Gran Turismo 5

White Knight Chronicles

Final Fantasy XIII

God Of War III

The Agency

! All release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to change.



READY MADE EXCUSE #31

Pull a sickie for... Batman Arkham Asylum

Doc says it's leaky sinuses – I'll be fine, then I'll suddenly swallow half a pint of phlegm and bang, straight back up. It ruined my cornflakes.



104 Medal winner

Killzone 2

Better than Modern Warfare?



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Dev Guerrilla Games Pub Sony Players 2-32 Web Killzone.com It's like Wearing Ned Kelly's armour while having a shootout in a Martian scrap yard.

Our love for Call Of Duty online is a dark and wondrous thing. We heart Modern Warfare, which we're still playing over a year on. [Sorry World At War, it was a fling. Please stop calling]. So to tempt us away, Killzone 2's multiplayer needed to be something pretty special. And it almost does enough, with some great maps, harsh weapons and interesting match types.

Battles are turbulent, panicky struggles over objectives, or vicious standoffs in cleverly designed bottlenecks. It looks amazing of course, with the single-player campaign's

concrete-and-rust beauty intact. It's all there: the motion blur; the melodramatic deaths as enemies fly back from shotgun blasts. Players even kick up dust trails, which are then whipped away by the wind. From now on all online games need to look like Michael Bay does Vietnam, on Mars.

Multi-task force

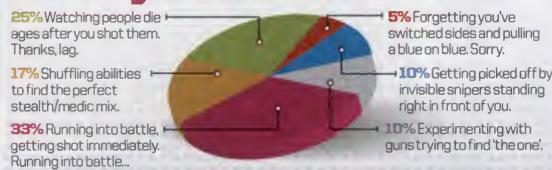
It plays like a slower, heavier Call Of Duty. That's 'slower and heavier' like a man carrying loads of gear, not 'wading through a ball pool'. You can get around quickly, though, thanks to a sprint glitch that replenishes stamina every time you jump [shhh, don't tell Guerrilla]. The slower pace works well because the game is designed to focus on the effective use of cover and dominating territory.

Instead of playing one game type you have up to five per round, such as deathmatch, territory battle or CTF. So you might be assassinating a target one

minute, securing areas the next, before a palate-cleansingly simple 'kill everybody' game. Because points are linked to objectives, the teams are constantly running head on at each other in order to reach their goals. For example, protecting an area in Capture & Hold means you score more for a kill in the contested area. It would be nice to see a little more variety in the mode structure; despite all the options it's always 'everygameatonceinonego', or just plain vanilla deathmatch.

One idea that doesn't quite gel is the inventive but flawed levelling-up system. Earning XP and completing challenges unlocks Badges that work like classes – medics, engineers and so on. You also earn Ribbons that unlock Medals and extra abilities, such as healing teammates or body armour. Unlocking secondary Badge slots means you can mix these abilities. It's an interesting and flexible idea, but messy in practice.

What you do in... Killzone 2





It's at times like this you wish you'd brought the rocket launcher. Or a white flag.

because the criteria for unlocking things varies wildly. Getting the medic's Medal is easy because you can just heal people. Fine. But the Engineer's medal is a pain because you need to get kills with the automated turrets they can build. Turrets that are weak like kitten burps and blow over in a light breeze. Consequently, some Medals require a few nights' tedious grinding or boosting (i.e. setting up a game with mates to cheat), others just a few rounds. It's also a short progression overall – you should be able to obtain everything with a few weeks' play. That said, killzone.com keeps things interesting by tracking all your stats: kills, weapons used, awards won, and the excellent Battle Replays where dots, representing players, swarm around top-down maps, letting you watch back old matches. It's brilliantly executed and hugely addictive in a 'how many people did I atomise with an RPG this week?' kind of way.

The biggest let down is the weird lag issues.

The Helghast's orange eyes make spotting them easy. ISA have blue identifier lights.

PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK
8

Leon Hurley

Online round-up

With Leon Hurley



Dear people who play **Team Fortress 2**. I've been doing some research – Google, Wiki and, oh I don't know, the in-game menu and I have discovered something: 2fort isn't the only map. There are, like, seven others. Although you'd never know because that's all you

ever play. All the time. I love the big dumb cartoon action here. It's a funny and surprisingly tactical shooter, and I never get bored of the classes. Do I play the Scout, running past people and clanging them on the back of head? Or the Heavy, lumbering about with a minigun the size of a cow? I love it but I just can't face another evening playing that damn map.

Let's forget that Capcom is charging for something that should be included. And skirt over the fact that **Resident Evil 5's** Versus content is clearly already on the disk and the two-second download you're paying £3.99 for is basically an unlock key. No, the thing to concentrate on is how poorly suited this is to multiplayer. Resi's 'thing' is that you have to stop moving to aim. So playing competitively involves running about to find an enemy, then standing still, facing each other and playing rock, paper, scissors with guns (clue: shotgun wins).



This is my new happy place: the exact moment in **Crash Commando** when you know your grenade is going to hit an enemy square in the face. I'm actually starting to think the Force might be real because you can *feel* it before you even pull the trigger.

There's a sudden moment of clarity through all the chaos. Tanks are firing everywhere, bullets are flying and things are exploding all over the place. In the middle of all that everyone's hurtling around on jet-packs while your grenade launcher shots curve through the air like angry sine waves, then – bam! Just for an instant, time freezes like a special effect from the Matrix films and it's like you can see the future. One where the other guy explodes in a bloody cloud and you air-punch for victory. A split second later the grenade hits home and your messy prophecy comes to pass.

Download of the month

They can call this the **Call Of Duty Map Pack 1** all they like but as far as I'm concerned this is MOAR ZOMBIES! Okay, you do get Knee Deep (a Japanese village), Nightfire (war-torn Berlin) and Station (a cramped subway) for your £7.99. But I'm all about Zombie Verrückt, a new map based on the Asylum level with new electric booby traps and Perks-A-Cola power-ups. You and three mates stemming the tide of goose-stepping, juddering Nazi cadavers is just about the most fun you can have online. It's fast and properly scary when you get overrun. This is because every time I die under a pawing, moaning crowd of undead corpses there's the recurring thought that, "Yes, this probably is how it will all end."



onlinePS3

FIFA 09 Ultimate Team Mode

■ The card-based squad screen is easy to navigate.



■ Don't wanna play real humans? Then compete offline against any club in the entire game.



■ Every stat is tracked on one tidy screen. Check out OPM Ben's goal tally. It pays to be selfish!



■ Matches are exactly like the FIFA 09 you know and love. Or hate, if you're a stubborn PES man.

Top deck

FIFA 09

Ultimate Team Mode

EA Sports plays its cards right

106 **P**ainful though it may be, it's time for even the most dedicated PES fanboy – that'll be me – to start giving FIFA some credit. While EA's game remains slightly inferior to its long-standing rival on the pitch, off it the mega-publisher continues to expand in ways Konami loyalists can only dream of. Be A Pro was a revolution when it first appeared in FIFA 08, and Ultimate Team is another mode that makes Master League look like a tired '90s relic. Sigh.

Going for gold

Available on PSN for £7.99, it is, at heart, a giant card game. Wait! Sit back down. The premise is, you win matches (on or offline) to gain coins to buy more cards to improve your team to win more matches, and so on. Card packs come in three flavours – bronze (500 coins), silver (2,500), and gold (5,000) – with the best players only found in the latter packs. So if you want Messi, it'll cost you.

But that's why Ultimate Team is such a refreshing change from standard FIFA: it's your band of also-rans (including yourself – you get one created player to skipper your side) against someone else's, and over time those nobodies

DevTalk



"It's a strategic new way to play FIFA 09 that will create hundreds of additional hours of playing time."
Andrew Wilson, Executive producer, EA Canada

become somebodies – to you, anyway. My first set of player cards included no-name Barnsley right-back Bobby Hassell; he's played so well for me I refuse to ship him out, even when a new pack produces a defender who's better on paper. As for Aussie winger Adrian Caceres? A legend, despite his lowly 60 overall rating. Forget Kaka. I love Caca.

Longevity comes simply through the obsession of not knowing where your next game, and next pack, will take you. Buying a new batch doesn't just give you players. You get contract cards that can be used to extend a player's stay (by default they're yours for between four and ten games); training cards that boost player stats; manager cards that improve a variety of your side's attributes; kit, badge and stadium cards which provide your club's identity; and cheat cards that can be used to swing a game your way, like making the ref more lenient. Then there are cards that represent unlockable celebrations, balls, and other goodies. It's an exhaustive list, and every pack throws up something new and exciting.

Info

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now
Pub EA Dev EA Canada **Players**
1-2-Web fifa09.ea.com/uk
It's like Unashamedly reliving your Panini sticker-obsessed youth in HD. Got, got, want, NEED!

Plus, if you fancy a sneaky shortcut to greatness, packs can be bought directly from the PlayStation Store – though my reward for spending 79p on a gold pack was the Chelsea kit. (I immediately discarded it. Obviously.)

A plethora of tournaments provide ample opportunity to win big coinage, while unwanted cards can be sold for a small fee, traded, or placed in 'The Collection' – a virtual sticker book where you receive bonuses for completing teams or entire leagues. Perhaps, like me, you need an obsessive compulsive streak to fully immerse yourself in it for the long haul, but the 'just one more go' factor is huge, driven by the ability to constantly improve your team and get shiny new stuff. It's well worth eight quid. **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

8

Giant update

Unreal Tournament III Titan Pack

Endless modded content? Long live the new flesh!

Multiplayer games have moved on since UTIII was released. We've had intimate co-op play from the likes of Resi 5, cartoon comedy from Team Fortress 2, and it's all served to make the traditional deathmatches of Unreal Tournament feel hooklessly old school. It plays like a dream, but there's very little in the tissue-thin storyline and visual presentation to make it lodge in the brain. Epic hopes this huge (over 1GB) free content pack will remedy that.

Think big

Two new game modes add an excellent layer of tension to UTIII's basic template. Greed has you delivering opponents' skulls to their base (unless you get killed, in which case you'll drop them all, plus the one in your head) and Betrayal places you in teams of three, with an ever-growing incentive to stab them in the back to claim the



Info

Format: PSN download ETA Out now
Pub: Midway Dev: Epic Players
1-16 Web: unrealtournament3.com
It's like Being given a delicious free dessert after a bloody, tasty steak.

team pot. Kill enough people, and you can morph into a 15ft nuclear Titan, and support your team with a volley of rockets. Kill more, and you can bloat into a 30ft behemoth, who's so game-unbalancingly powerful he blows up after 30 seconds.

It's all fun, but there's still no unique selling point – unless you count Unreal's long-established modding community. Epic has installed a mod browser into the menu system, allowing you to download and install new fan-made maps, characters and types. You can't judge a game by the user-generated content, but the massive Titan update alone makes UTIII worth buying. **Jon Blyth**



► Your teammates may kindly offer to 'cover you', but can you trust them?



Royal rumble

Prince Of Persia Epilogue

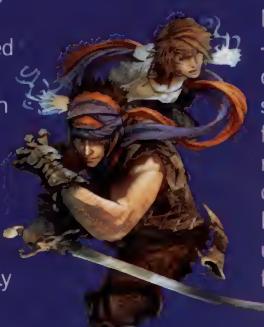
An expensive case of déjà vu



► "I can't die and you've got regenerating health... shall we just call a truce?"

You've had the slightly unsatisfying main course, and now Ubisoft is serving up some Prince-flavoured pudding. In this new chapter Elika and the Persian royal have to escape through an underground palace. It might sound semi-exciting, but that very much depends of your definition of 'new'.

The skill level needed doesn't feel like a huge step up from the original, but there are a few moments, awkwardly



placed rings and precise jumps, that are certainly tricky. On top of that Elika has an additional power that lets her use coloured tablets to create giant blue walls ready for you to scamper across, making it harder to judge your next step and keeping you on the tip of your toes. Mainly though, Epilogue relies on spreading out the checkpoints to bump up the difficulty level, so you'll need to retrace more steps if you fall. That's not harder, that's just more annoying.

Familiar faces

It's the same situation with the enemies – they've all been recycled from the original and keep recurring like some sort of terrible fungal infection. You'll fight the Shapeshifter and his regenerating goddamn health over and over again, and Elika's daddy dearest shows up for a few half-hearted fisticuffs. The Prince does



Info

Format: PSN download ETA Out now
Pub: Ubisoft Dev: Ubisoft Montreal
Players: 1 Web: snipurl.com/fv5i It's like Staying behind at circus school.

have a new move in battle, but it's just running... sorry 'charging', at the enemy a bit faster. You'll hardly notice it among all the repetitive quick-time attacks.

The original's art style divided fans, but at least in Epilogue we can all agree to being disappointed. Set underground in a world of grey it's got the look of a wet weekend in Bognor Regis. Basically, they've taken the saddest part of the game and stretched it out. A seasoned

Persia player who's just finished the original could probably race through the whole thing in three hours or so, and at £8, (that's £2.66 per hour) that's fast approaching minimum wage. **Rachel Penny**



PS3 Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



Platformer

LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.

10 Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule

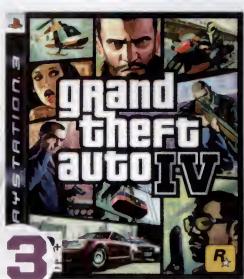


Shooter

Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

10 Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



Action

Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA - the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour - polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

10 Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



Stealth

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

10 Pub Konami
Dev Konami Productions

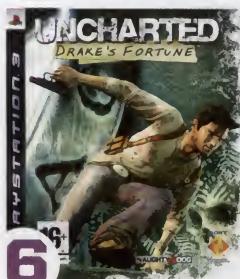


Platformer

Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.

10 Pub 2K Games
Dev 2K Marin



Action-Adventure

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog



Shooter

Killzone 2

Looks to die for, and endless waves of orange-eyed space Nazis aiming to ensure that's exactly what happens. Guerrilla's super-shooter is gritty, fierce and an utterly essential buy.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Guerrilla



Fighter

Street Fighter IV

Stunning return to form for the series, satisfying both the hardcore and newcomers like a particularly supple lady of the night. Lush visuals and sweet online play make this essential.

9 Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom



Shooter

Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac



Platformer

Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac

PS3 Cops

Grand Theft Auto IV
Deputy commissioner Francis McReary is the kind of guy who gives crooked cops a bad name.



Calling All Cars

Play cops and robbers with your mates, competing to round up the escaped cons.



Need For Speed: Undercover
Ignore the highway code in the vague hope you'll eventually be arrested by officer sexy here.



The Club
NYPD's Remwick finds himself trapped in shooting galleries run for the amusement of the rich and psychopathic.

Team Choice



Resistance 2

Big, bombastic bosses, completely over-the-top weapons and a beautifully realised Chimera-ravaged alternate America (love the Chicago level) come together to make this my favourite PS3 shooter. All, hail Hale!

Ben Wilson
Deputy editor



Power

Custom silicon harnesses crisp HD, ear-splitting audio, multi-processor might, and Blu-ray to deliver pure gaming perfection.



Connectivity

USB slots to plug in your motion-sensing Sixaxis pads and many other devices.

Online

Surf the net, message friends and download movies, music and expansion packs, plus demos and games from the PlayStation Store.

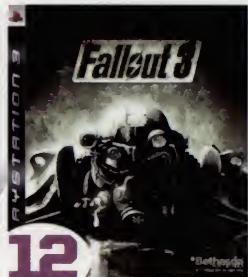


11

Music SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. OutKast's Hey Ya and The Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.

9 Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios London



12

Action-RPG Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.

9 Pub Bethesda Softworks
Dev Bethesda Game Studios



13

Action Mirror's Edge

A real Marmite game. We loved it for the thrill of leaping across the glistening rooftops of a suspiciously perfect future city while pursued by trigger-happy cops. Idiots, meanwhile, didn't.

9 Pub EA
Dev DICE

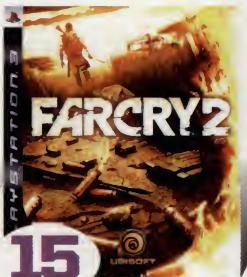


14

Sports FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.

9 Pub EA
Dev EA Canada

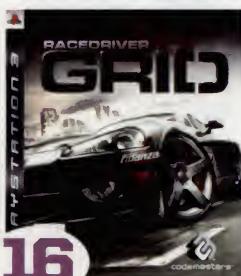


15

Shooter Far Cry 2

Dry, dusty, African sandbox run-and-gun action with an ace level editor. Not only do you have to avoid the bullets in your hunt for arms dealer The Jackal, there's malaria to deal with, too.

9 Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft Montreal



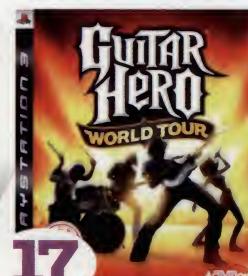
16

Racer

Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars combine to create the most satisfying racer yet on PS3.

9 Pub Codemasters
Dev Codemasters



17

Music Guitar Hero World Tour

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio too!

9 Pub Activision
Dev Neversoft



18

Racer

Burnout Paradise: The Ultimate Box

The best racer on PS3, now repackaged with tons of DLC and featuring motorbikes and night-time in addition to searingly fast racing. Simply beautiful.

9 Pub EA
Dev Criterion Games

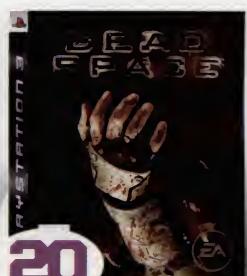


19

Action Resident Evil 5

Horror classic swaps dark corners for the glare of the African sun to reveal the origins of the virus, and the new co-op mode is relationship-destroying magic. "You let them eat me!"

8 Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom



20

Action Dead Space

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.

8 Pub EA
Dev EA Redwood Shores



Condemned 2

Until he got into drink and bashing in hobs with planks, Ethan Thomas was a proud member of the Serial Crime Unit.



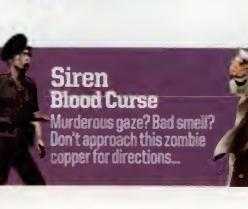
Street Fighter IV

There's more to Chun-Li than a pretty face and an oak-like pair of thighs: she's also an undercover Interpol agent.



Lego Batman

Commissioner Gordon's men do their best to keep the villains down, but have to call the plastic vigilante for help.



Siren Blood Curse

Murderous gaze? Bad smell? Don't approach this zombie copper for directions...



Stranglehold

Chow Yun-Fat reprises his role as Inspector Tequila for this John Woo-directed slo-mo, dove-fancying shooter.



■ Eboué, demonstrating the sort of tight marking Nath apparently doesn't believe in.



OPM sign off with win

Season ends with hard-fought victory

It was hardly the result that our season deserved, but at this point we'll take any win. In a side full of seasoned, loyal campaigners – Liverpool101 and Lukes007cool001, we salute you – OPM's brave Arsenal team completed a 2-1 victory over a scratch matchmaking Barcelona side to ride out the FIFA 09 Online Challenge in style.

We opened the scoring just after the 20-minute mark, with the ever-prolific Liverpool101 sliding home after an uncharacteristically patient build-up.

Barca then had a period of sustained pressure – not helped, dressing room whispers suggest, by OPM_Nath's 'suicidal' insistence on playing it out of defence. But then Lukes007 struck just before half time to add a second, effectively ending the game as a contest. Barca hit back late on to make for a tight last ten (during which time Nath's router exploded), but OPM held on for the win.

The season might be over, but we'll continue to play friendlies through the OPM club. See you all online.



Sign up to play our FIFA 09 side now
gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge

THE WORLD'S **NUMBER ONE** PC GAMES MAGAZINE

PC GAMER

**NEW
LOOK**

DOUBLE SCOOP!

SUP COM 2

SHOCK SEQUEL REVEAL!

**ALIENS VS
PREDATOR**

TRIPLE TERROR RETURNS!



THE BEST REVIEWS
ANYWHERE

DEMIGOD

BRAID

COMPANY OF HEROES

TALES OF VALOR

AND 18 MORE

THE SAVIOUR
OF PC GAMING
STARCRAFT 2

EXCLUSIVE!

DRM IS
DEAD
THE SIMS 3
KILLS COPY
PROTECTION

**GAMING
ON THE GO**
PLAY ONLINE
ANYWHERE

PC GAMER

EVE ONLINE

BE A GALACTIC HERO!
14-DAY FREE TRIAL

**DVD
ROM**

26

PLAYABLE
DEMONS

WANTED
BULLET-TIME
GUNFIGHTS!

AND MUCH MORE...

18

Indie Games Fifteen of the world's
best including the IGF finalists. Play
a modern classic!

Extras Essential patches, drivers
and utilities, marvellous movies, PC

Gamer podcasts, galleries and more

WATCHMEN

CLOBBER CRIMINAL
SCUM FOR JUSTICE!

WALLACE & GROMIT
EPISODE ONE
PIRATE GALAXY
AGE OF BOOTY
EMPIRE MODS
FLOCK!

gamesradar.com



18
UK Edition £5.99
June 2009 Issue 201
www.pcgamer.co.uk

JUNE 2009 £5.99

0.67



9 771470 169009

**PC GAMING
IS CHANGING.
SO ARE WE.**

New issue on sale **07.05.09**

mail@opm



Living the digital dream, Resi 5 is rubbish, so is our Killzone 2 score, MGS5 set to star Raiden and death to the demon Sonic!

OPM TV?

Hey guys, I've come up with a great idea. Your mag is so totally awesome you should race ahead of the other videogame magazines by making your own TV show. When I was in Poland there was one on every night and it rocked. You could discuss stuff like future releases, show gameplay and share cheats. It would be so cool!

Matti Darowski, by email

Funny you should mention it. Right now our newly-formed multimedia wing is

From PlayStation hopes and fears to technical queries, this is the place to come for answers

Email us at opm@futurenet.com or write to Letters, OPM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

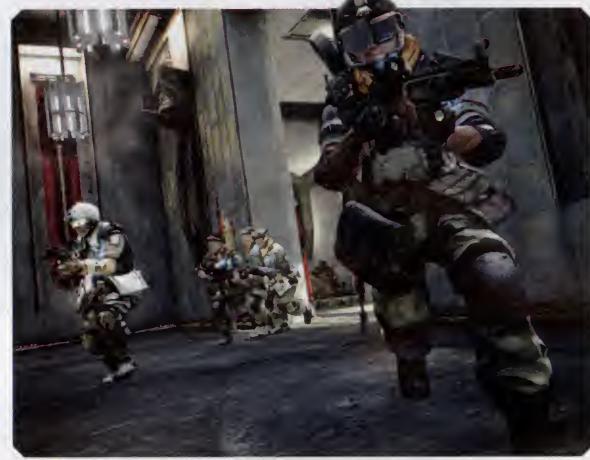
tiger crawling under netting with knives clenched in their teeth and worryingly expensive HD cameras strapped to their backs. What with our new website – officialplaystationmagazine.com – and another big launch on the way, we'll soon be able to service you constantly. Yaya.

Resident rant

Having just got Resi 5 I'm well and truly disappointed. I was expecting a few action and horror moments, but what I got was action, action, action. It wasn't what I expected at all. Okay, so it isn't a horror game anymore – Dead Space and FEAR 2 both fill in that gap quite nicely anyway – but just about everything in Resi 5 is copied from Resi 4. The only thing that actually made a difference was Sheva. It could quite possibly win the biggest disappointment of the year award, not because it's a bad game, but because with a £70 million budget (allegedly) and a three-year development period, jeepers, you'd think they could do better.

Jordan Wray, by email

Yeah, Resident Evil 5 was a little too play-safe for our liking – and the reason for that has to be the departure of Shinji Mikami, the man who invented the series



■ Killzone 2, a game that's just to die for.



Text OPM
Text 'Letters' then your message to 87474 – we'll include the best txts in the mag innit!*

and who revitalised Resident Evil 4 when it was stuck in development hell. The exciting news is that he's currently making a horror game for EA in conjunction with Killer 7's Suda 51. Expect it to be huge.

Man loses run of self

I don't normally write letters due to not exactly being the sharpest tool in the box, so deep breath, fingers crossed and here goes. Sweet baby Jesus, who in Christ's sweet name gave Killzone 2 a pathetic 9/10? What's the sweet world coming to? Did he just find out his sweet wife was playing away from home? Was he tripping on crack cocaine or PCP? Oh sweet mother of Joseph... my brain is going to explode into a supernova. I feel like chopping my limbs off and strangling myself with a length of cheese wire. Please tell me it's a joke us thick people don't get?

Ian Parkinson, by email

Usually these letters come written on an old receipt, in what could be blood, or could be... worse. So it's nice to see that you're finally embracing email (which we don't have to touch). For the record, our reviewer is not currently taking any mind-altering substances beyond echinacea, he doesn't have a wife, and he really knows his shooters. It's a 9/10.

What's on my hard drive



Johnboy Cole
Charlton, London

Music

DJ Hype, Andy C, The Prodigy etc. Sounds so good in the Burnout: Paradise city sunshine.

Photo

About 500 Metal Gear Online pics, transferred to Facebook, holiday snaps and the OPM Clan meet-up.



Video

GOW III, MGO Scene trailer, HAWX recordings, loads of imported DVDs.

Game

MGS4, SingStar, Resi 5, Street Fighter IV, COD4, Burnout, Killzone 2, Soulcalibur IV, Noby Noby Boy...

Friends

At least 45 people from the OPM Facebook Clan, The Amazing Rocket Minions. Love you guys!

Sonic doom

After reading your review of the latest Sonic The Hedgehog game, I realised Sonic was never going to get a good review (although I'm amazed they were able to create a sidekick even more annoying than Tails!). The problem with Sonic is simple: he worked perfectly in a 2D environment, but since the advent of 3D games he just wasn't able to make the jump. Everything Sega has done to desperately try to breathe new life into the old hog has fallen flatter than Cristiano Ronaldo being hit by a leaf. The only way forwards is for Sega to put the hedgehog to rest and maybe create a new character and a new franchise. Who knows? Maybe it would work just as well.

Guy Colegate, by email

At this point Sonic's just embarrassing himself. The truth is, running around at warp speed simply doesn't work in 3D. But rather than reach for the sharp-bladed shovel just yet, all Sega needs to do is make another 2D Sonic but in hi-def. Then watch the big review scores roll in.

Gearing up

Last night I was doing the whole socialising thing with the Mrs and her friends and let's just say I got a little bored. So I started thinking... Metal Gear Solid 5 is rumoured to be in the pipeline but there's been no definite yes or no. Kojima could think up some shameless cash-in prequel or he could make MGS5 about Raiden's story. Everyone has played as him in full cyborg mode and he's pretty kickass, but all we're ever told in MGS4 is that the Patriots were manipulating him and using him as a weapon against his will. It's never explained why he augmented his body or why he had synthetic blood or why he went into full ninja mode in the first place. So MGS5 could be about Raiden's story taking off from MGS2 – at the beginning he is a normal guy but some accident befalls him and then the Patriots augment him and send him on a mission... which leads up to MGS4 and Raiden's revolt... it would be pretty cool.

Jamie Beattie, by email

We confidently predict a new Metal Gear will be announced at this year's E3 in June. But Raiden as a hero? Okay, he's been rehabilitated, but a whole game of him being a bit sad and sicking up white goop? Do not want.

Time to send Sonic to one of those Swiss clinics?



Q Can I save my downloaded PSN games to an external hard drive?

A No. PSN games need to be saved to PS3's internal hard drive. If you upgrade your PS3's internal hard drive instead you will have the extra space and be able to save PSN titles to it.

Do you really want Raiden to return?

Page turner

Why has there never been a Led Zeppelin song on any of the Guitar Hero games? I'd be satisfied with just one download of Black Dog – the combination of drums, vocal and bass would be amazing after a few drinks. Which cleverly leads me on to the lack of good songs for the bass. I've only found The Joker to be any good. Guitar Hero is the game parties were designed for but the lack of decent bass lines is abysmal.

Robert Lewis, by email

Apparently Jimmy Page doesn't like money, and doesn't want to hand over the master recordings, so there's only one thing for it: grow an imperious mullet, strap your plastic guitar to your back and storm parliament naked. Oh, and when the batons come out don't say we sent you.

Sweet silverware

After getting fed up that every other player I met seemed to have Trophies for Uncharted I decided to delete the game and replay it again. All I can say is wow! I remember really enjoying Uncharted the first time... but it is so much better second time around. I'm loving the treasure hunting more than before, trying out all the weapons just to get their Trophies, and having a go at the stealth kills and brutal combos instead of just blasting away like I did before.

In my fanatical drive for Trophy collection I've seen a different side to Uncharted that I missed the first time; a side that I might never have seen had it not been for those addictive little Trophies...

Scott Harvie, by email

You've nailed the addictive appeal of Trophies. For that we both love (and hate) you.

Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group

Baker banker

"How do you know when you're old? When your limited edition GTA IV lockbox is used for bank statements."

Lee Baker

Killzone calamity

"I will happily walk into the line of fire just to watch the splendid animation of my hardened war vet pegging it. Obviously, you won't want to sign me up to your squads!"

Paul West

Captain corset

"I never made a very good pirate. I looked stupid in a head scarf and corset!"

Nick Leighton

Bum punctuation

"Woah guys, it may look like a face but there are a lot of colons flying around here."

Holly Cooper

Badger parade

"I think badgers are robot government spies. Think about it... You hardly ever see them. When I was younger I remember badgers being big, now they're small because robotics have come on a fair bit. When they're lying in the road dead, they're not, they're recharging their solar batteries."

Harry Corder-Gill

Pop Hero

"I wish The Saturdays would make a Guitar Hero."

Sam Pullen

Send your questions to:
opm@futurenet.com

Red Harlow

Rockstar's mean son of a gun

When Red Harlow's Pa and Ma are gunned down in front of his young eyes for their share of a rich vein of gold under Bear Mountain, the kid swears he'll take revenge. And over the 24 chapters of Rockstar's Spaghetti Western shooter, that's what he does – taking jobs as a bounty hunter that, kill-by-kill, flush out the guilty. When Red finally shoots up Pa's greedy former partner – *Governor Griffon* – he's offered a chunk of the fortune that should've been his. "It was never about the money," says Red, and strolls off into the sunset. What. A. Legend.

Best jobs in the West

Carnival life

No bearded ladies, perhaps, but Red and partner Jack's bizarre carnival showdown compensates with gun-totin' dwarves, a blubbery TNT obsessive and a teleporting illusionist mad man.



Annie get your cow

When no-nonsense, thigh-slappin' ranch owner Annie Stakes learns that the homestead is about to be attacked by Governor Griffon's bandits, she rides to defend it on one of her ornery steers. Feisty!



Reach for the sky

If there's any doubt that Red is harder than pig iron, it evaporates during Brimstone's Battle Royale quick-draw competition where he guns down Mariachi mentalist Kelley and Kid Cougar [a child!] en route to a \$5,000 prize.



Diego's Train

The best level in the game sees Red galloping his nag after General Diego's armoured train and finally taking out the engine using a gatling gun bolted to a handcart running parallel to the iron beast. Choo-choo!



Best side irons

Bayonet

Forget the Bayonet's stabby party trick – its real worth is for picking off the game's weirdy bearded snipers. Slow to reload, but accurate like a wronged girlfriend's memory and just as deadly.



Bottle bomb

Frontier hooch is a mighty powerful brew, as clearly demonstrated if you lob a lit bottle of old gut rot at an enemy. Just make sure that naughty Jack Swift doesn't drink it all first...



Inquisitor

Defeat mad, teleporting carnival despot Professor Perry and this is your just reward – a lightning-fast pistol with almost supernatural accuracy. The black and gold detailing suits us, too.



Widowmaker

With its fancy gold and ivory detailing the maker may look like a hairdresser's side iron but along with the Inquisitor, it's the most powerful handgun in the game. Kicks like a robot mule.



#28 PLAYSTATION LEGENDS

PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK



Compadres and varmints

Jack Swift

Derby of hat, waxed of moustache and posh like a pheasant driving a Rolls, Jack is a former duellist, lured from England with the promise of work as a trickshotter, and then imprisoned by a carnival owner. Red frees him after which he's our hero's right-hand [gentle]man. Fond of the sauce.



Annie Stakes

Easily the match of any man in Red Dead's rough, tough frontier world, Annie not only successfully defends her ranch from Griffon's rough riders, but also gives Red valuable back-up when he closes in on the corrupt Governor.



Buffalo Soldier

US Army soldier Buffalo initially makes the mistake of following the chain of command, siding with Griffon rather than Red. As hell in the bent Governor's jail puts paid to that, and he eventually comes good, using his sniping skills to help Red get his vengeance.



Ugly Chris

Clearly Chris doesn't listen to country music. When he and his gang of equally 'homely' banditos shoot Red's dog cold, they invoke his wrath and end up getting measured for plywood suits in the dusty town's funeral parlour.



Red trivia



Originally a Capcom game, Red Dead Revolver was dropped, then bought by Rockstar, who gave the Wild West premise an ace Spaghetti Western spin.



During RDR, Red duels with bad guys Sergio, Ennio and Eli – a nod to Western icons, director Sergio Leone, composer Ennio Morricone and actor Eli Wallach.



General Javier Diego is fond of quoting Scarface's Tony Montana while fighting – "Say hello to my little friend!" Like Tony, he ends up eating his own words.



Watch TV in Grand Theft Auto IV's safe houses and footage from Red Dead Revolver makes a cameo as Western series Spittoon.



Rob Bogue, who voiced Red, once appeared in Sex And The City as a man who couldn't stop fiddling with his balls in public.



27th ANNUAL
**GOLDEN
JOYSTICK
AWARDS**

Vote now at
goldenjoystick.com



**The votes
are rolling in**

Make sure your favourite game makes the shortlist by voting before the 22nd May 2009

The Golden Joystick Awards are known globally as 'The People's Gaming Awards' and they're the industry's most prestigious. Why? Because they're voted for by the people who matter most – you. Whether you're a PC, PlayStation, Nintendo or Xbox fan, this is your opportunity to make sure your favourite game claims the ultimate gaming accolade, a Golden Joystick Award.



Go to www.goldenjoystick.com to vote and ensure your favourite game is on the prestigious shortlist

DON'T MESS WITH THE McCALLS

coming
July 09

CALL OF JUAREZ

BOUND IN BLOOD

www.callofjuarez.com



DEMO COMING TO XBOX LIVE® AND PLAYSTATION® NETWORK

16+
TM
www.pegi.info



XBOX 360.

XBOX
LIVE



PLAYSTATION 3

PC
DVD
ROM

TECHLAND®

UBISOFT®

